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REVELATIO REVELATA

THE SUPREME TEST

THE WORLD'S PRAYER

(*Revelatio Revelata*)

1642 d

By

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"The Philosophy of Ritual," "The Analytics of a Belief in a Future Life," "The World as Intention," "The Substance of Literature"

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Wilt thou show wonders to the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise thee? Selah.

Shall thy loving kindness be declared in the grave? Or thy faithfulness in destruction?

Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? And thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?

—*PSALM LXXXVIII*

I cannot understand either the frame of mind that shrinks from extinction, nor that which professes to anticipate and believe in it. I should not be surprised if after all the Egyptians were right, and the death of a man were the birth of a soul. But (like my namesake, Joey) I wants to know: and supposing this to be the case, are we always to live on under a burden of old griefs constantly accumulating at compound interest, for ever? Or will a time come when the onrush of some inconceivable Dawn will brush aside the cobwebs of the unsatisfactory past—even the pleasures Memory has turned into pain—and put the shocking old house in order for an interminable Day?

———— —*Joseph Vance.*

Will my tiny spark of being
Wholly vanish in your deeps and lights?
Must my day be dark by reason,
O ye Heavens, of your boundless nights,
Rush of Sun and roll of systems,
And your fiery clash of meteorites?

———— —*Tennyson.*

For in this earthly frame
Our's is the reptile lot, much toil, much blame,
Manifold motions making little speed,
And to deform and kill the things whereon we feed.

———— —*Wordsworth.*

Could we but know
The land that ends our dark, uncertain travel.
Where lie those happier rills and meadows low—
Ah, if beyond the spirit's inmost cavil,
Aught of that country could we surely know,
Who would not go?

Might we but hear
The hovering angels' high imagined chorus,
Or catch, betimes, with wakeful eyes and clear,
One radiant vista of the realm before us—
Ah, who would fear?

Were we quite sure
To find the peerless friend who left us lonely,
Or, there by some celestial stream as pure,
To gaze in eyes that here were lovelit only,
This weary, mortal coil, were we quite sure,
Who would endure? —*Stedman.*

———

It is a miserable thing for a question of truth to be confined to mere presumption and counter-presumption, with no decisive thunderbolt of fact to clear the baffling darkness.—*Wm. James.*

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PREFACE

There are moments in life when a sense of dreary aimlessness overwhelms our incessant activities and duties, and momentarily halts them. It is absolutely necessary to feel a goal of achievement ahead of us, and the permanency of individual progress, in order to animate our attention and preserve our zeal. A thousand things can form such a goal, and they are none the less useful as incentives, if they limit each day with only its round of domestic or business duties, so that each day, as a unit of performance, brings the satiety of satisfaction in work well done. But we in philosophic moments, especially if endowed with some liberality of thought, crave a larger outlook and a deeper stimulus. That can really only come in the fullest sense from a realization of a cosmic meaning in the world's movement, some end referable to the excellence or success of our own conduct. It means a God and a Future Life, or it means a terrestrial procession forward to an ultimate perfectibility, in which if we are not participants we have, for it, been calculable agents, through our present justice or industry, or faithfulness or wisdom.

But is it not possible for us to increase our certainty as to this, not by the futility of argument and discussion, but by an appeal, a deliberate discriminating and universal appeal to the power which Christians assume to be God, and to draw from the results of such a critical

test the divergent conclusions which the results—positive or negative—authorize? I will not anticipate the argument here used in the following pages, to give plausibility, or more reverently, earnestness and reasonableness to this experiment, but I beg for an instant, the reader's attention to the congruity of the attempt, and its legitimate harmony with all other methods of ascertaining truth.

Experiment is the crucial test of theory, it is the key to the unknown, it is the only conceivable step to be taken when a new vista is to be opened in nature, or an entrance is to be effected upon ascending stages of corroborative discovery. Can we not extend the use of this munificent instrument of investigation to the religious areas of our life, especially as we are supposed to have—according to Christian profession, and the book herein following is based upon Christian claims—a direct access to the mysterious realms of power which underly or are superimposed upon the visible universe?

Objections to such a Plan are discussed in the pages of the book itself, and it is only here insisted that it is not a presumptuous suggestion, that its usefulness is directly enforced by all the evidence about us in science, and that we should not hesitate to utilize this beneficent procedure in religion, or in religious subjects. If we can sincerely believe, it may yield us practical results. What is an experiment? Obviously the artificial juncture of artificial conditions in a process of interrogating nature as to her laws and the substance of her phenomena. Or else experiment consists in adopting a procedure or a course of conduct, which it is expected may produce desirable effects.

Thus Moissan in his studies on the origin of the diamond through conditions made possible by the electric furnace secured results, which if not exactly repeated in nature, did definitely throw light upon possible phases of its formation. The crumpled layers of cloth which Sir James Hall produced by a weight upon and compression from the sides of, sheets of horizontal cloth, revealed forces at work in the folding and plication of the stratified rocks of the earth's surface. One of the greatest triumphs of modern chemistry was the production of artificial alizarine which has displaced the natural madder. It was by a long series of experiments that finally in 1869 Graebe and Lieberman accomplished this, leading to the utilization of the anthracene of the coal tar products, for the manufacture of the brilliant madder dye. These experiments were of the interrogatory sort.

The hypothesis that experiment can be introduced into the religious field is not preposterous, and it might have amazing and stupendous consequences. Or it might not. Here again we, in this last case, would opportunely learn something. Experiments accurately made are the test of truth. They must always confirm the letter of authority, or if they do not, we are brought to the edge of a new wisdom. Indeed we are not always over anxious that they will justify our expectations and forecasts. Now as a fact experimentation enters in a very grandiose and exacting way into religious experiences or religious calculations. It is nothing less than the living of a correct life, by numbers who, relying on the assertions of their spiritual guides,

expect the fruition in another life of the bliss promised to faith and obedience in this one. This can scarcely be questioned, for it is a matter of confession with many, and of a confession made reverently, with a very composed sense of the seriousness of the admission. It was the experiment that the great Pascal so conclusively urged, and an experiment that no one, it seems to me, need to feel ashamed of. Religious lives are led on higher grounds of impulse than experiment, to be sure, but the experimentalists should suffer no embarrassment from the contempt of their superior companions. They have every reason to believe their moderation should receive some reward. Their experiment belongs to the second class mentioned above, those of demonstrative trial. We have suggested an experiment in this book which at least we aver merits attention, and should not lightly be ignored because it is an experiment, or might be called such. The association of the word experiment with a religious question may sound disagreeable, and convey the impression of a cool, calculating, observant and narrowly inquisitive, and purely secular spirit, quite emotionless, and perhaps a little cynical.

But in the experiment here considered such an impression is utterly false. We urge that it is to be undertaken in the religious spirit and on religious grounds. It certainly could be made on no other. There is an appropriate mental atmosphere, so to speak, and an attitude unquestionably appropriate, for scientific experiment, and an experimenter entering upon a series of physico-chemical experiments is intellectually

observant, and not emotionally hopeful, or aesthetically elated, although, as has often been shown, he may be laboring under some excitement. The psychological temper of a religious experiment would be quite different, and it might be thought quite without analogy, inasmuch as we think of experiment and experimentation as solely in the purview of the natural sciences.

But there have been experiments in other fields sensibly colored with the emotional glow, the flushed ardor of hope, the intenser currents of the heart's love, and they have been in the fields of art and of music. I think what I am in search of has taken place among innovators in painting, perhaps with men like Turner, and in music with Wagners who struggled to incorporate in music the fibre and the expression of nature and of man. To start a new style in art, to reach out for effects in a spirit of earnest, conscientious heartiness and thrilled expectancy, brings more nearly in view the kind of temper involved in the experiments we are pleading for. It is clearly contrasted with the imperturbable and keen scrutiny of a biologist or a physician; it becomes saturated with the nervous energies of hope and affection; it draws upon the deepest springs of feeling and it is accompanied by a bending of the whole soul towards its object, so that the blended streams of emotion and mind pour their contents of humour, sensation, sympathy, experience, thought and fancy, into the mould of the artist's or composer's creative imagination, and something new and splendid is brought to the light of day, and to the appreciation of men and women.

The experiment outlined in this book is meant to be no cold and chilled interrogation, but a throbbing supplication that the silence around us be somehow broken, and we shall be permitted again to hear the voice of God—or—that there shall still be silence. We may, we do call it an experiment—and perhaps so it is—but it is one gathering in its execution the summed up hopes of men, and crowds all their passionate curiosity into an act of sublime expostulation and entreaty. The age and the hour are propitious for its geographic universality. Commerce and communication have gathered all the nations of the earth at the threshold of the Future, and they are waiting. Can they not by a prolonged and unanimous invocation fetch to this darkened and rambling earth a fresh assurance—or—rising from the sterility of their sublime effort, plunge into new economies and new philosophies?

CHAPTER I

Our Predicament

The only puzzled creature on the surface of our rolling globe is man. He alone is at odds with his condition, his environment, his functions; and his puzzle only reaches any kind of analytical value, so far as language can express it, after he has parted with his aboriginal forebears and begun to expect better things.

The universe grows in strangeness and puts on the habiliments of an incongruous or maddening disarray, as the mind of man attains ideals of a formal order, either in logic or justice, which are hopelessly at variance with a haphazard and an unjust world. But yet more significantly his complaints centre in himself, and his vision disordered by his own disabilities or trials communicates perhaps a deceptive crookedness to the outside order.

As an Indian or any other kind of wild man he had no contentions, no grumblings, no mutiny. He was born amid surroundings of which he seemed as naturally a part as the game of the mountains he hunted, or the roots of medicinal plants he tore from the ground. His mind involved in no other quest, felt no harsh discord between its postulates or requests and the dancing retinue of physical phenomena about him which formed his world, or if these at moments, in more speculative individuals, turned up with inconsequent urgency, they never engendered much else than a stifled wonder.

Their possessor, raised for a moment above the monotonous or unruffled acquiescence of its fellows, soon fell back into the apathy of assent, and could never for a long time, and never clearly, explain his misgivings or distinguish his motives.

The wild man's moods, his contentment, or his unruffled fusion with his surroundings, and his calm patience with his life is perfectly reflected in the brute creatures that accompany him in his work. The dog or the sheep, the horse, oxen, cat, cow, move unreflectingly in the expanse of prairie, or on the mountain slope, in unquestioning and unrepining obedience to instinct or habit. In few instances do they possess enough querulous rationality to resent ill treatment. No summons to rebellion, no matter what extremes of extinction or what vagaries of suffering afflict them, receives any encouragement in the tread mill accuracy of repetition in the animal life.

The whole animated world—and man as an aboriginal belongs to it—is inured to the spectacle of its own misery, or at any rate makes no deductions from its happiness in living, because of pain and deprivation. Every animal does elicit from living a measurable amount of happiness—a preponderant amount—but it would be a most histrionic moment in zoological events if the woodchuck demonstrably railed at fate because he did not have wings to migrate to sanitary and warmer latitudes when the winter seals him in his hole.

It is only as a creature, possessed with reason, begins to consider his condition, if an unhappy one, as a consequence of no actions of his own, and his resentment

gains reinforcement from an inspection of innumerable similar states, that he impugns the scheme of creation, and employs himself in finding reasons for it, or less sensibly engages in its denunciation. Our condition as portrayed by James Fitzjames Stephen (Essays by a Barrister), even under circumstances of material comfort are not calculated to allay discontent. He says, "take then one reasonably prosperous person and see whether he is in an entirely satisfactory condition. It is clear that he is not. He neither knows whence he comes nor whither he is going, nor for what purpose he lives: at least his knowledge upon these subjects is indefinite, so much involved in metaphors and mysteries, that it is little more than enough to make visible the darkness in which he stands."

If then such reflections afflict the peace of mind of an average well-to-do man, probably enjoying the commonplace ameliorations of life, how much more poignantly do they disturb those who suffer many physical deprivations, or those endowed with acute sensibilities, who discover the wide gulf of separation between realities and ideals. To the struggling worker the world is a hard place to live in, to the questioning philosopher it is a hard world to believe in. The latter, to be sure, is not unwilling to offer a way to believe in it, or a plan by which to confer upon it a rational simplicity, and, as a matter of fact, he is better off in a world which seems to need just this theoretical interpretation. But his very activity, the bare fact of the philosopher at all is a clean and eloquent advertisement of the world's, at least, apparent confusion. He

is needed for no other purpose than to explain its problems and enact for it a mental scheme which would make it comprehensible. And there have been many such schemes, and that they contradict each other, that the world is divided in its allegiance to their dicta, that inscrutable and indefatigable apologists are constantly on their feet and in arms to defend their numerous claims, their *isms* and their logic, their contentions and their subtentions, in no wise increases the general sentiment of confidence, or contributes any amazing luminousness to the clouded skies. The same author quoted above has also said, "life can never be a matter of exultation, nor can the progress of arts and sciences ever fill the heart of a man who has a heart to be filled."

Not only is the world a mechanical device which amuses and interests us to solve, and incidentally enormously sharpens our wits in the doing of it, but we, its human elements, like another world of emotions imbedded in it, form a group of incessant and unconvinced questioners, whose curiosity perhaps has roots in their own unsatisfied hearts. And so, we are brought directly against the question, "what are our relations to the objective world, around and before us?"

Now this question assumes many phases of intellectual interest. It may be the old metaphysical one as to whether the objective world exists in itself, and would be there with all its customary phenomena, if, by a conceivable annihilation we, as a race of perceiving creatures, were utterly abolished? Whether the world is a subjective creation, intrinsically appari-

tional, and subtending a realm of ideas arising in us, or whether irrespective of ideation it would carry on its retinue of changes, and multivariously expand into all the lineaments of living things we observe today, when no appreciative eye could admire them, and no inquisitive mind record them? It may be the more emotional question of what use is any connection between ourselves and the world, and what suppositions are requisite to explain our being here at all, especially as existence is a sharp fight against disease and want, with a minimum of rewards and a maximum of irrelevant pains?

It may be the more scientific question, is living in such a world desirable, and what conceivable stimulants for its continuance can be formulated that will excuse the perpetuation of its distresses?

It may be the purely hedonistic query as to whether life is enjoyment, or whether it is meant for anything else than enjoyment, or the teleological one as to whether life has an object, and all of these questions may be infinitely modified by their juxtaposition to an infinite number of personal accidents and relations in those asking them. And yet all the same, as Mr. Stephen pertinently says, "the material of which life is made may be, and probably in most cases is, satisfactory, for there can be no doubt that if life not only was an evil, but was felt and perceived to be such, the population would be speedily thinned by suicide or by vice," but he adds, "it does not however, follow that because they find it pleasant they enjoy it," all of which is tantamount to saying that as we are here, we

stay here, having a pardonable repugnance to extinction or even transportation, as in the latter case we are quite ignorant whether we shall be as well off as we are.

Our Predicament is quite unmistakable even under any and all halcyon skies—even though we feel at moments Whitman's robust exultation in living,

> I exist as I am, that is enough,
> If no other in the world be aware I sit content,
> And if each and all be aware I sit content,
> One world is aware and by far the largest to me, and that is myself.
> And whether I come to my own today or in ten thousand, or two million years,
> I can cheerfully take it now or with equal cheerfulness I can wait.
> My foothold is tenon'd and mortis'd in granite
> I laugh at what you call dissolution and I know the amplitude of time.

Most men are driven to thought, at times, from inclination, as most men are driven, invariably, to thought from bereavement and disappointment; and when we think, we are certainly impressed with the meaningless darkness about us—especially if we contrive to feel for the bewildered masses submerged in toil and almost animal insensibility, for the fallen lives that have filled the centuries with suffering.

There does remain indeed the interpretation of the world which Prof. James has labelled "subjectivism," and which may, genially regarded by those not actually participants in the storm and wrack of the world, be made into a serviceable consolation. For subjectivism means that view of the world which turns it into a spectacle and a play. It is the romantic interpretation

of the world of which Prof. James writes, "if the dilemma of determinism be to choose between it—subjectivism—and pessimism, I see little room for hesitation from the strictly theoretical point of view. Subjectivism seems the more rational scheme. And the world may, possibly, for aught I know, be nothing else. When the healthy love of life is on one, and all its forms and its appetites seem so unutterably real; when the most brutal and the most spiritual things are lit by the same sun, and each is an integral part of the total richness—why then it seems a grudging and sickly way of meeting so robust a universe, to shrink from any of its facts and wish them not to be. Rather take the strictly dramatic point of view and treat the whole thing as a great unending romance which the spirit of the universe, striving to realize its own content, is eternally thinking out and representing to itself." (The Dilemma of Determinism.)

Certainly the philosophers of all degrees and pretensions have not been inactive in preparing solutions of this world, and our relations to it, but they sound such weird and inconclusive notes, and to average intelligences seem so bewildering and unnatural, that philosophy in this day of direct material convictions produces the effect so graphically depicted by Prof. James' student.

"This young man, who was a graduate of some western college, began by saying that he had always taken for granted that when you entered a philosophic class room you had to open relations with a universe entirely distinct from the one you left behind you in the street.

The two were supposed, he said, to have so little to do with each other, that you could not possibly occupy your mind with them at the same time. The world of concrete personal experiences, to which the street belongs, is multitudinous beyond imagination, tangled, muddy, painful and perplexed. The world to which your philosophy professor introduces you is simple, clean and noble. The contradictions of real life are absent from it. Its architecture is classic. Principles of reason trace its outlines, logical necessities cement its parts. Purity and dignity are what it most expresses. It is a kind of marble temple shining on a hill."

Fortunately psychology has here, and in this scientific day intervened, and formed a *via media* which somehow seems to render philosophy more tolerable or at least brings it closer to our affections. By the introduction of facts which we know and recognize, even the dry fabric and, as James says, the "hurdy-gurdy monotony" of Spencer's philosophy gains a human interest.

Now however Our Predicament is not to most of us work-a-day people the clamorous need of defining our metaphysical positions—the restlessness of thinkers in splitting up our consciousness, the logical firmness which they display in separating percept from concept; it is not surely any unsatisfied craving to be told that the object is modified by the receptivities of the subject, and that the external world *in se* is Unknowable, nor do we particularly care whether as Mr. Hodgson tells us "that before Reflection the *is* of judgment is the *is* of the Copula, in reflection first, and then in its derivatives, it becomes the *is* of existence"; the cogni-

tions *a priori*, and the categorical imperative scarcely interest us.

If we express our queries as to our relations to the objective world in the language of the street, or the workshop, or the reflective moments which come in those pauses when the obstreperous and importunate world recedes from our attention, and weariness of things fatigues us, if we should utter what we then feel, it might be in words like these; "we are the descendants of millions upon millions of beings like ourselves, who have engaged in the tasks of living and generally under conditions less favorable to happiness than ourselves; this population enormous in its extent, which has utterly vanished, contained every variety of human mind, and was not inconsiderably provided with wonderful individual intellects: What is called History is made up of the actions and interactions of these incalculable multitudes and, for the most part, it has been a record of painful tragedies, bloodthirsty wars, infinite physical suffering, the display of ignoble and ruthless passions, with innumerable instances of sublime heroism and patience and exalted ideals, and the slow emergence of self-governed and comparatively comfortable communities, such as represent the advanced civilized states of this present time.

"From all this compilation of human lives we survive, together with our heritage from them of wise thoughts and beautiful creations, but of them, those who left us the thoughts and the creations—a colossal aggregate of immaterialities, assuming Mind to be immaterial—not a breath, not a whisper of reassurance

that they have in any way resisted the shock of physical dissolution! As far as we see, their obliteration is about as complete as the erasure of the chalk marks from a blackboard with a wet sponge, or the solution of the mists into transparent air under the heat of the sun. Where are they? Anywhere? Knowing how insatiably we crave an indubitable sign from them is it not surprising that they give none? Have these departed ones to whom Life so affluently administered its joys, even though it also mingled the salutary shadows of its disappointments, quite forgotten all they cherished, or has Memory with them perished with the mutation of the mere body, and disappeared into the incessant chase of atoms, or, more modernly yet, into the inconceivable energy of electrons?

"And yet further; if questionings and remonstrance have arisen as education and reflection have advanced, if Revelation, as it is called, seems obviously insufficient, at least for those who find its utterance painfully inadequate, and the history of its tenets and its confessors humiliating, if matters as we know them seem to contradict some of the vital affirmations of that Revelation, why is there not, at this favorable moment, some response to our legitimate demand from the source of the Revelation itself? Surely the old statements need reinforcement. If it is so important for us to believe that Revelation, why not a little help? Can not the Sources of the other revelation supply this new day with another, or if not another, in any kind of aesthetic and spiritual completeness, then a *Sign?* God should tell us again that He is in the Universe, in

this world of ours, and that this life is not the end; for as James Fitzjames Stephen has well said; 'This is the vital question of all. It is the true centre, not only of Mr. Mill's book upon liberty, but of all the great discussions of our day and generation. Upon this hangs all religion, all morals, all politics, all legislation—everything which interests men as men. Is there or not a God and a future state? Is this world all?' "

This expresses broadly Our Predicament. It has reached proportions of intellectual embarrassment for many today, because of an immensely enlarged knowledge of nature, wherein the Reign of Law, once established in the physical universe, has been widely detected in the mental and moral. Perhaps to the great mass of toilers, at least in these United States, more tolerable conditions of living blunt their eagerness to have any recourse to supernatural avenues of assistance. To a great many men and women, and the number of these is daily growing, it is certain, or almost so, that there is no God and no future life, and generally speaking convictions of this sort must sensibly modify current conduct, though it is also a matter of plain observation that numbers of atheists and agnostics live up to standards rigorously just and high. But it seems impossible that all the sentiments that have enriched life and can be directly traced to the influence of the spiritual teachings of Religion may yet be retained, when the primary articles of such a faith are rejected or so diluted with doubts as to suffer a complete textual deterioration.

It is also quite true that in many ways the interest of living derives an intensity from the hazardous posi-

tion we occupy. The jeopardy of being damned or the chance of being saved and blessed are certainly worth considering, even if being damned means only extinction, and being saved and blessed means some further extension of our present state under conditions more delightful, if not of ideal felicity. The rational objection to any such a supposition is naturally the difficulty of associating the tremendous import of the things implied with the apparently indifferent attitude of saying Yes or No to a series of unproved, unprovable, and somewhat unreal assertions. To be sure a great deal can in this matter be urged by the apologist of religion, in any shape, to the effect that assent simply to a creed is not in any effective way a *real belief;* that Belief wins its transcendental reward when it is so deeply assimilated in the moral and mental tissues, so to speak, of its recipient or professor, that it guides every motion of his life, and colors every thought, and consistently ministers to the order and the contents of his judgments. But however regarded it is clear that Religion has introduced the element of Risk in life, and does, quite suitably, mingle its obscurities with the pervasive nebulae that so closely and variously envelop us.

Apart from the question as to whether there is a God and a Future Life, which would sensibly render our sufferings and vicissitudes of bereavement more tolerable, and perhaps point to their propitionary or probational character and meaning, there must exist, with many, a subsidiary sense of vexation and perplexity over the commonness of our human position. The

mere physiological requisites of our organization are vulgar and humiliating. The painful eccentricities of character and disposition accompanying physical deformity and revolting appetites, the hideousness of sickness and the innumerable individual instances of a defective body. There seems to be an inseparable dirtiness in living, a kind of physical abjectness, a loathesome leprosy of nastiness which no one escapes; all life seems stained with the ordure of necessary animal habits. Our bodies are, we are taught, the results of Evolution, and like most things formed by that ubiquitous process, are a botch, a makeshift, a compromise. They are propagated by methods not generally discussed, though such methods form the ridiculous *raison d'etre* of a national literature—the French novel—they are nourished by an unbroken though discontinuous system of stuffing, which brings in its train a retinue of disagreeable and objectionable consequences, they have no permanence, they grow old and ugly and decline to death through stages of tiresome or pathetic weakness, and then, if Nature is allowed to have her way, they become a repository for worms, and mingle with the gases and the fluids and the soil of the earth in a succession of disgusting aspects. Lucidly regarded there is nothing in our bodies that ought to awaken pride. It is quite incontestable, and a matter of inquiry that with such an outfit of bodily characters, why we should not have, under proper conditions, some assurance that we may survive elsewhere more benignly.

And if our body provokes discontent and a worried feeling of embarrassment, what is to be said about the

social contract? In the thousands of years that the experiment of organized government has been tried no ideal results have been attained, and for the most part their history reveals an incessant struggle of an oppressed part of the state to maintain or secure rights, indubitably theirs, which another portion, for purely selfish motives, refuses to concede. It is sure that there is progress along the lines of improvement, and amelioration, but no sooner do we find ourselves advanced in one direction than our discomfited attention is called to the fact that we have receded along others, though usually we have no reason to think that we have not gained in sane and sanitary living. On the whole our life is a little preposterous and unmistakably mysterious.

Doubtless there may be those who can be described in the language which Leslie Stephen uses to express his brother's—James Fitzjames'—opinion of Dicken's novels; "a world of smug little tradesmen of shallow and half-educated minds, with paltry ambitions, utter ignorance of history and philosophy, shrinking instinctively from all strenuous thought and resenting every attack upon the placid optimism in which it delights to wrap itself. It has no perception of the doubts and difficulties which beset loftier minds, or any consciousness of the great drama of history in which our generation is only playing its part for the passing hour." But it can hardly escape the notice of the most inopportune and thoughtless men that human life is a transitory matter, and that human society, like our material bodies, renews itself through an unceasing change of its individual components. They *must* feel

the unsatisfactory relations we bear to the universe at large, if this life is the end of the story, and the summation of a career of endeavor, self-control and achievement counts for nothing to its author and actor, and is lost, irretrievably lost, in annihilation. They surely realize, even though with less potency than their fellows in the placid and eventless passage of their lives, that death and separation are facts, that sickness and pain are inevitable, and that old age and infirmity are unavoidable consequences, and that the crumbling of a lifetime into the narrow limits of a coffin seems an indisputably inglorious termination to a life led, even within its straightened circumstances, with a just regard for the duties of the household.

It can not altogether recommend itself to them to look at our existence as simply permissive, and that we should reconcile ourselves to extinction without a murmur, because we are as absolutely involuntary agents in the procession of the organic manifestations of our world, as the ants, the butterflies, or the swarming motes in the sunbeam. And yet these "smug optimists," that so much irritated the serious and thoughtful Stephen do not deserve so choleric a denunciation. It is most obvious today that people have drifted into a frame of mind which accepts life as they find it, without much protest and without much expectation. If they, fortunately for themselves, enjoy the ordinary pleasures, the activity of work accomplished and delighted in, the serenity of happy homes, the enlightenment of knowledge, the wonders of discovery and the play of human sentiment and invention

over the irridescent and changing surface of history and adventure, if they have health and friends, perhaps admiration and distinction, if they find their legitimate desires for some sort of perpetuation, in the promotion and guidance of families—as many do—fully gratified, if, above all, they feel that they have done their best, wronged no one, and played the part of men, they are not disturbed as the end of life approaches with sentimental or religious fears, that they come to the edge of the grave and await the descent without wavering, or repulsion. These are not lean minded and dull or vulgarly self-satisfied people; they are men and women who might say as Stephen said himself, "I have found life sweet, bright, glorious. I should dearly like to live again; but I am not afraid, and I hope when the time comes, I shall not be averse to die."

Such persons undoubtedly realize Our Predicament. They would welcome any present and unmistakable proof that we survive the process of death although they might have some natural aversion to possible forms of a future existence, they are not prejudiced against the Revelation, which to religious and Christian believers in the extended arms of the Church, answers every need, but they practically deny its efficacy to meet present needs and, looked at in a large way, and under the scientific environment of the day, does it?

To men such as William George Ward, and his biographer Wilfrid Ward, belief was not really difficult. The readers of Witnesses to the Unseen may recall the strong plea of Father Walton, as to the illuminative insight which personal interest gives to men in receiving

the present evidences of Christianity. He argued with considerable reasonableness that in the first place "that where the satisfaction of believing a thing is what is desired, and the correspondence of a belief with objective fact is a matter of small anxiety or importance to oneself, the wish is often father to the thought. Belief is readily obtained, although its quality is extremely bad. But where the truth of the fact is of the first importance, and an untrue belief is useless—where genuine conviction of the fact in question is desired, the desire will not beget readiness but rather caution in believing. It will make a man less easily convinced than another by the evidence ready to hand. He so much wishes that the thing shoud be true that he fears to believe it, holding, in the words of the proverb that it is too good to be true. But on the other hand, he is more ready than another to give himself every chance of discovering whether what he so much wishes for be really true. The wish then may be father to a shallow self-deceitful idea, but it renders true conviction in a certain sense slower although proportionally dearer and surer."

And in the second place Walton argues, in the ingenious dialogue, that an interested man "will marshall the evidences which are offered to lead him to it with an activity of mind, and will ponder them with an earnestness, which one who views the whole matter as an interesting problem only, can never possess: and so he is convinced sooner, not through bias, but because the argument instead of remaining logical, formulae outside him, have taken full possession of his soul, and are felt

not as vague ideas, but as facts, vividly realized in all their connexion with each other and with himself."

In the third place, impelled by such internal conditions the searcher after truth finds that with its evidences and with its intrinsic nature Christianity appeals overpoweringly to him, and his surrender to it is quickly followed by a proportionate degree of moral comfort, emotional peace and intellectual rest. Among such inquirers the Wards, Newmans, Maurices, Froudes, may be naturally placed, and their assent to the supernatural character and enduring sufficiency of the Christian religion readily understood.

But the temperament of this day is a little more practical and less abstruse. Our Predicament involves no essential objection to Christianity—rather indeed with its moral and spiritual aspects there is today a very sincere admiration—but clearer and less argumentative proofs. And—unless perhaps those souls are only acceptable to God who can accept the revelation under its present limitations of doubt—for the best interests of humanity it would seem a reasonable request that in some way the revelation should be reinforced. Many are driven shrewdly to suspect that God does not minutely consider the state of men nor conclusively direct their individual motions. Many of the promises in the revelation demonstrably do not seem to be fulfilled. It is harder today than ever perhaps before to believe it, as it antagonizes the scientific temper—which let it be observed is a very honest and just one—though it may be observed that it cooperates with a purely credulous one. Can it not

be frankly asked that God grant another revelation supplementary and coercive and save the earth from a total collapse from faith? It would certainly appear that never in the history of the race has a time developed when revelation would be more intelligently welcomed by thousands who might secure from it their peace of mind and—in the language of theology—their own salvation.

It was indeed Cardinal Newman who penned the following words, words which might be found so naturally in the mouths of thousands who have utterly failed to reach the cardinal's compact and absorbing faith and who do not find as he did a convincing voice rebuking their doubts. Newman has written; "the world seems simply to give the lie to that great truth (the existence of God) of which my being is so full: and the effect upon me is, in consequence as a matter of necessity, as confusing as if it denied that I am in existence myself. If I looked in a mirror and did not see my face I should have the sort of feeling which actually comes upon me, when I look into the living busy world and see no reflection of its Creator. This is to me one of those great difficulties of this absolute primary truth, to which I referred just now. Were it not for this voice speaking so clearly in my conscience and my heart, I should be an atheist, or a pantheist, or a polytheist, when I look into the world. The sight of the world is nothing else than the prophet's scroll, 'full of lamentations and mourning and woe'."

Now the attitude of sentimental longing and spiritual aspiration is not the characteristic attitude of the most

of men today. They feel—and it would seem rightly—that the revelation needs replenished evidences, a strengthened modern rehabiliament, some sort of reiteration or, as I have said, reenforcement. The events of the revelation are far off, and so distant that they lose their effectiveness, and the many things said in them as to the imminence of God do not seem altogether *vraisemblable*, in a day that is revelling in knowledge that was utterly unapprehended at the time of the revelation itself. If the revelation is of soul-saving importance why may not the reasonable quest or petition for its present reestablishment be entertained? The processes of thought seem now all repugnant to the spirit of the revelation, seem distinctly antagonistic to its atmosphere of supernatural design and execution.

The Christian doctrine is a most reasonable one, as meeting our objections to the hardships, disgusts and sorrows of this earth, with the assurance that the earth is only a stepping stone to better things, is a place of probation and preparation, the foreordained theatre of conflict and trial, in which the faithful and believing man is also the foreordained protagonist. This has a sane and adequate sound, but when we inspect its history, promises, and assumed prerogatives, it does not seem to many, imbued with the materialistic impressions overwhelmingly created in this scientific day, at all probable, or possible. It can be frankly said today that it suffers discredit, because it appears unsupported. Its fondest assertions as to the efficacy of prayer, and the immediate watchfulness of God over

the interests of his children, is far from incontrovertible, and, in an age when the inner visions of faith are discouraged, the Doctrine needs some forcible and convincing reiteration. It can hardly be questioned that its message needs renewal.

At present it lacks spectacular potency. This language must not be misunderstood. It is not used in a derisive or disparaging sense. It only indicates the absence of supernatural power in the Christian church. There is a hopeless attempt at it in the Pope, but really what does that amount to? Under present conditions the Pope—proclaimed as the Vicar of Christ—seems to be an excellent man, with absolutely no power, and with his church—if appearances in France are not deceiving—falling away from him, and he seems nothing more. He is surrounded with imagery and symbols, but he is helpless and, one would say, not superior in substantial influence over any ordinary other man with good sense and an irreproachable record.

Perhaps the nearest recent approach to the kind of phenomenon we crave is the Christian scientist movement, which in a way does interrogate our wonder, and at any rate quite obdurately asks God to assert his power and fulfill the expectations of his disciples, to the confusion of scepticism and empiricism. But this Christian church or organization has fallen into disrepute and fails. Its startling tenet that there is no such thing as matter—of course a familiar philosophical hobby—is not assumed in the Christian dispensation, but its immediate reliance upon God as a possible, Nay! an absolute controller over disease and disaster,

is. But intellectually this body is destitute, and even without emotional grandeur, while its founder, Mrs. Eddy, is so surprisingly silly, and her ridiculous book—the Bible or Commission of this interesting society—so utterly confounds one with its empty phrases and sophomoric orphism that it can scarcely be expected to greatly influence or reestablish faith.

What is needed? As the matter now stands it would seem that of all the religions offered to the twentieth century man, with a good heart and an enlightened understanding and imagination, and with aptitude for religious feelings, is this same discredited Christianity, but it requires a renewed substantial emphasis. It received this emphasis in the past when people were more credulous, and when fables and hearsay miracles were implicitly believed. This answered well enough. It will scarcely answer now. The spirit of the Catholic church realizes this keenly, and wisely, and I am far from questioning some of its manifold instances of supernatural intervention. It understands that the world will not cling to God, if He is too far away, if He does not show Himself at times, and impressively and beautifully reawaken the ardor and the constancy of devotion to Him, by visions and manifestations full of spiritual sweetness.

It is an organic necessity. Our faith needs replenishment by occasional stimulation. It is creditable to the hardihood and earnestness of our religious desires that we keep on believing with such stringent circumstances of opposition to weaken and destroy faith. Reassurance is an obvious help. The parable of the rich man

in Hell fire who wished to return to the earth to tell his brothers of the fact of future punishment, and who was denied this privilege because they would not believe "though one rose from the dead" is certainly not applicable now. Nothing would be of more startling efficacy and immediate remedial force to broken faiths, than just such a phenomenon. It might be subjected to very sharp scrutiny, and the requirements of evidence be somewhat abruptly and sternly insisted on. But who can doubt that the plain proof of such an occurrence would not have an extraordinarily healthful result in charging our languid hopes with a new fire?

It is incontestable that religious interests have, in a noticeable degree, receded before the pushing exuberance of innumerable modern diversions, studies, and mental, social, and purely personal indulgences. Religion is vague, and the subjects of science, of history, of literature seem immensely real, vital, and attractive. They exclude religion by developing a tone of thought, and exciting a range of appetite and enthusiasm to which religion is repugnant or even partially ludicrous, and by religion we mean generally Christian doctrine. Men feel shy of it, and there seem monumental objections to, it might almost be said disproofs of, its provisions and assertions.

Why not a renovation, a new dispensation? It might be greatly feared by those who recall, at least from contemporaneous records, how religious ecstacy and hallucination made men forget and neglect the business and the learning of this world, and fall into unwise and ruinous habits of unrestrained devotion.

These temporary perturbations would be of slight importance, in comparison with the incommensurate value of a renewed revelation. The obdurate pessimism of the day would vanish before such a dispensation, and the sluggish or paralyzed beliefs of the faithful become galvanized with power. Nothing could be more certain. And is not this desirable? Are the present conditions satisfactory, or from the Christian standpoint conducive to the welfare of the world? Apparently, judging from the repeated lamentations of the preachers at the unfilled churches, not. It is not apparent that there is less real benevolence in the world than in the days of a thorough going faith, and especially not in this country. But there has grown up a fundamental skepticism as to the things of the next world, and a hardly concealed wonder that anyone cares to regulate his life by considerations based on the particular chances he may expect, of happiness hereafter as a reward for his conduct here.

The events of the world take place without any discoverable reference to the ideal, and utterly without reference to justice. As Prof. Royce has written in that wonderful book of his—The Religious Aspect of Philosophy—"other evil (than that which is deliberately chosen) seems absolutely mysterious, when viewed with reference to God's goodness; and very little of the evil that we experience in this world is the direct result of the deliberate choice of those who suffer it. It is hardly necessary to illustrate these facts which belong to the best known and most frequently misrepresented of the matters of human controversy. The poor of

great cities, the men who inherit loathsome diseases, the naturally weak of will, the insane, the sufferers in accidents, the soldiers led to slaughter, the slaves, the down-trodden peasants and laborers of the world: all these, whose ills are simply inconceivable in might, have no more brought all this on themselves of their own free will, than have the healthy and happy, the heirs of wealth, the ever joyous, earned for themselves the good fortune to which they are born."

In this same book we are shown in a most eloquent manner the struggle for some sort of interpretation of this weary world and its ultimate discomfiture and repulse; shown it in the poets and philosophers and thinkers, until we reach ethical skepticism and ethical pessimism, and land ourselves in such illogical and insupportable rubbish as Schopenhauer's inimical Will, or Hartman's obstreperous and malicious *Unbewustsein*. Innumerable apologies are composed, and endless figments of systems proposed, by which the dreary perplexity can be made endurable, besides all sorts of most admirable cries and adjurations for us to keep our courage up and wait. And in the midst of it all, are a consecrated few who are busy winning fame for their creations, their science, or their acts, so busy indeed that they have no time to become querulous or lachrymose.

But these probationary conditions ought to stop, and some resounding or—let it be even so—obscurely critical communication come to us from the Unknown, from God, if that be possible, and pierce the gloom with some unwonted and amazing illumination.

If this could be, much might be lost; the shadowy wonderment, the fitful strokes of light, the blind brave fighting, the incessant experiment, the genial materialism, the dramatic intensity, the variable siege of the outlying darkness, the fortitude and patience, the blinded rush at all sorts of calls, hither and thither, and the wayward leapings of the wicked and the amusing; this might disappear, to the lasting injury of literature, and the circulating library, and the newspaper, but it might disappear in the seething glow of an uplifted spiritual life.

CHAPTER II

A Silent or a Speaking God

The assumption of a God is a difficult one to deal with. For in the first place what does it really imply and how shall we draw the lineaments of a situation so extraordinary; where are we supposed to place God, or under what material aspects are we permitted to regard Him and preserve the philosophical outlines this marvellous conception demands? It is quite possible to become frivolous, and it is no less likely that we may be incomprehensible. From what datum can we start in forming an ideal of Him, what elements does He involve, and when constructed what are His necessary relations to us? We can only proceed in this superlative quest by analogy, and the facts in the case, if they mean anything, must be extracted from the acknowledged views of the Christian church because the experimental test we are looking for is the logical consequence of those views.

If we are not mistaken those views hold that God made the world, that in that sense He is the father of men, that He is a spirit omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal, and—on this we base our hopes—He is sympathetically involved in the eternal happiness of the human race, that the human race is, in a profound sense alienated from Him, and that He has provided ways and means for their reconciliation. It has often

been pointed out that this conception is not philosophically perfect, that it is self-contradictory and defective, and that it seems to be very violently impeached by history. Prof. Royce has in one particular indicated a "fruitful and serious difficulty"; it is found in the fact "that the concept of producing an external thing involves, of necessity, a relation to a Law, above both producer and product, which determines the conditions under which there can be a product at all. The creative power must then work under conditions however magical and mysterious its acts may be. And working under conditions it must be finite. No device for minimizing the meaning of this separation of creative power and created thing will really escape the difficulty resulting. And this difficulty will appear in all cases of supposed creation. It may be summed up once more in the statement that any creative power in act, just as much needs explanation in some higher law and power as does the thing created itself, so that, whatever creates a product external to itself becomes thereby as truly dependent a power as we ourselves are."

But this does not matter. The quest we are on is a practical one, and is unconcerned with the antinomies of Christian definition. Accepting the Christian postulates can we inaugurate a plan for securing still more conclusive—in a modern sense—information about the very things which lie at the root of Christian hopes, the existence of God himself and the fact of a Future Life?

It is quite evident that there are conceptions of God which would offer us no such possibilities. The Un-

knowable of Mr. Spencer's for instance, under no conceivable predicaments of invocation, would vouchsafe the smallest answer to our importunities. The pantheistic idea would be equally unresponsive. With these deities an answer would upset the demiurgic equilibrium, and introduce a discordant note in the sublime and massively indifferent progress of events, in the evolution of the universe, in which the wind that blows or the violet starting into bloom, are coequal parts, along with man, in its foreordained and limitless destiny. Neither the Unknowable of Spencer nor the Panurge of Spinoza, could spare time to elucidate themselves in any way to questioning and grieved men, they would explicitly invoke their own destruction by definition. But the God of Christianity has already —accepting the revelation—particularized himself by a word, a sign. No human thought could determine the conditions which provoked so momentous an incident, but is it not possible by rational surmises to devise a way to interpellate God and win new avowals? There may seem to be an intemperate hardihood about such a proposition, but is it unreasonable? It is suggested in no scoffing or delusive mood. Let us see more particularly what a revelation from God implies, for no happenings under the sun would impress one as being more stupendous.

We have elsewhere (The World as Intention) suggested that the Christian revelations were promulgated under the stimulus of Desire and Necessity, and it is evident, without rehearsing the reflections recorded there, that this implies in God an emotional, and what

for a better term we may designate as a forensic nature; viz. a nature accessible to the appeals of sympathy, of pity, of supplication, and a nature open to the claims of reason, inasmuch as the necessity above mentioned must have been a rationally recognized necessity. If on other grounds than the revelations themselves this could be established, these would seem to be distinctly helpful to our hopes. And on other grounds than the revelations we shall attempt here to at least make it overpoweringly probable, and all this on the Christian hypothesis. A fundamental postulate of that hypothesis is that God made the universe and is its sole and responsible author and therefore the avenue of approach to His attributes might be in a general way reached through His creation.

Certainly it may be difficult to conceive the method or the mode of such creation; it might land us in some absurdity if we searched too minutely to explain just what we meant by creation, but it is almost self evident that, assuming creation, the nature of the Creator should therein appear.

At the same time we are acquainted with views which seem to make the God of the Universe a self-involved principle, embodying Himself in the myriad aspects of the world which are supposed to express Him, but outside of which He cannot be, and which are related to Him as the leaves, the flowers and the fruits of the tree are to the germinal power of growth the whole tree expresses. The theory has a kind of biological expression as if the world or the universe was a sort of development, an infinitely varied and ubiquitously extended

manifestation in a consubstantial way of the God. And, for that matter, we humans are bits, fragments, localized reflections of Him, "together with all forms, moods, shows" of matter, for the whole world is mind. Says Royce—the very remarkable interpreter and missionary of this idealism—"they are perfectly right, therefore, who deny designs as factors in natural processes. The true World-Will, being no phenomenon in space and time, is no form of physical energy, and moves no matter.

"The laws of matter more or less completely portray, but do not, physically speaking, result from the Logos. No creative fiat produced the world at any moment in past time. To say that would be to assert the existence somewhere in time of an utterly indescribable event which is precisely what nobody can assert of the world of time, since this world is nothing unless in so far as it is describable. For the same reason no will, infinite or finite, ever, by any temporal interference, turned aside a single atom in its flight. The physical world shows us, indeed, a plan, but only in so far as the space and time phenomena symbolize and very poorly translate an unity, that, as it is in itself, is an unity of will, of self-consciousness, of a divine interest in truth, of an equally divine self-possession, of an eternal rest in the fullness of perfected being. In this will, the finite wills themselves share, and of it they are a part, since this unity includes, knows and justifies the organized relationships of the whole universe of finite appreciations. The physical world expresses such a world-will, but is not subject to the interference of this will."

Now that evidently is not the Christian conception though it often borrows in its exposition the current aphorisms of Christian phraseology. The test, herein purported to be suggested, is based on the Christian view, and in that view God is revealed in the visible universe and in mind, but He is revealed as a workman is by his work. He stands outside and supereminent to His work and suffers no diminution of authority over His creation, at any time. And while He may have far-off fixed omniscient and imperturbable designs, the Christian thought interjects the paradox that He is still open to intercession, to the practiced and co-ordinated appeal of spirits. But *does His creation* furnish grounds for believing that He is sensitive to the claims of emotion and reason? A creator can remain outside of his work and occupy to it very contrasted relations. It might express his nature exactly, so that the careful observer or the skillful analyst could divine the peculiar or unique qualities, the temperamental meaning of the author and perhaps draw indubitable conclusions as to his temper and his taste. Again it is quite conceivable that the work of an artist or an author may be a forced disguise of himself, and exhibit, by means of his embracing art, his controlled technique, a nexus of qualities that are not appropriate to him at all; that incontestably misrepresent and burlesque him. He might be driven to such expedients to hide his own identity, or for the indulgence of some interesting jest or deception. Taken in connexion with the making of a universe the latter conception seems curiously humiliating. There

might indeed be another intention. The world or any other commensurate creation, might be intended to be a display, a mere drama, an exhibition, a monstrous vaudeville show, "all with no deeper purpose than just life in all its endlessness, motion, striving, changing, flying, struggling, wandering, returning to itself, onward-flying, conflict, fullness, of power, even though that shall mean fullness of sorrow and anguish." Views of this sort as to the nature and origin of the universe are not incongruous to the philosophies of pessimism, to the ingenious devices of Schopenhauer and Van Hartman but they are utterly repugnant to the Christian doctrine, to that beneficent ideal of a creative God who in the first approved His world as "good," and who later witnessed its pollution by the development of that germinal power of choice which mysteriously introduced a train of consequences which deprived the world of its crystalline clarity and limpid beauty, and in making it turbid with passion and wickedness, administered to it also the higher possibilities of virtue, since as Hegel says "die Tugend ist der hochste, vollendete Kampf."

Now it seems quite certain that if God did make the world, that however much its original outlines, lineaments, and configurations have been distorted by the entrance of something called Sin, there is enough of its first state left for us to catch a very informing glimpse of what kind of a god, God is, and if so, then whether He would appear to be open to the calls of reason and compassion. This inquiry cannot but prove entertaining,

and remember Reader that we are working on Christian postulations not altogether with confidence, but by hypothesis. Our immediate design is to find out, if we can, how much of the world before the "Fall" remains in the world we all objectively see around us. To do that it will be necessary to classify this objective world under categories of existence, and for that objective world we accept the sort of reality which M. Poincare has given it in his thoughtful essays on the "Value of Science," and which I think would be adequate for the concessions of authoritative Christianity. He says variously; "external objects, for instance, for which the word *object* was invented, are really objects and not fleeting and fugitive appearances, because they are not only groups of sensations, but groups cemented by a constant bond. It is this bond, and this bond alone, which is the object in itself, and this bond is a relation.

"Therefore when we ask what is the objective value of science, that does not mean: does science teach us the true nature of things? but it means: does science teach us the true *relations* of things?

"To the first question, no one would hesitate to reply, No; but I think we may go farther; not only science cannot teach us the nature of things; but nothing is capable of teaching it to us, and if any god knew it, he could not find words to express it. Not only can we not divine the response, but if it were given us, we could understand nothing of it; I ask myself even whether we understand the question.

"When, therefore, a scientific theory pretends to teach us what heat is, or what is electricity, or life, it is condemned beforehand; all it can give us is only a crude image. It is therefore provisional and crumbling.

"The first question being out of reason, the second remains. Can science teach us the true relations of things? What it joins together should that be put asunder, what it puts asunder should that be joined together?" And he answers this last question, that generally and in the long run science does find out permanent relations. And as to our belief in external objects; "these' latter are real in this, that the sensations they make us feel appear to us as united to each other by I know not what indestructible cement *and not by the hazard of a day.* In the same way science reveals to us between phenomena other bonds finer but not less solid; these are threads so slender that they long remain unperceived, but once noticed there remains no way of not seeing them; they are therefore not less real than those which give their reality to external objects; small matter that they are more recently known, since neither can perish before the other."

If then this apparent external world can in a real sense be so considered, and we are searching in it for the evidences of the susceptibilities of the God, who made it, to our natural requests for knowledge, and we are therein engaged, on the general Christian hypothesis, we must look for those evidences in the unspoiled residues of the world left still unsullied by the Fall, and

in which most naturally we may expect to see God illuminatively reflected.

However ludicrous to the scientific mind the doctrine of a Fall seems, as applied to the material world and its inhabitants, it is, as we understand it, a very significant dogma in Christian theologics and this whole essay is intended to test the Christian position. Certainly no credence could be given by science to any such doctrine as the Fall, which, in the view (held by science) of the slow evolution of Man from some sort of simian creature to the possession of a developed mind, must only seem an absurd interpolation devised for the satisfaction of a theological dilemma.

But we are quite right in insisting that the Christian Church promulgates that doctrine. Mr. C. W. E. Body, the Bishop Paddock lecturer for 1894, says in the Permanent Value of the Book of Genesis that "evil as we see it, approaches man from without. It has no original place either in human nature, or in the creation of which man is the divinely constituted representative and head. But evil though it does not originate in the creation, yet uses the creation as a means through which to make its approach.

"The right relation in which man stood to the created things around him was already clearly indicated. He was to move amongst the creation as Prophet, Priest and King. As Prophet to represent God therein, as Priest to voice its unconscious service before God, as King to bring it into an ever deeper, more harmonious fellowship with himself, to defend it against the inroads

of disorder and of moral evil. Clearly it was in this relation to the creation that man's supreme responsibility and testing lay; and so it is, in this special relation, that the Tempter finds his ground of attack. Through the creation he obtains his channel of approach.

"The sad sequel is traced out in the succeeding narratives. There we see laid bare for all time the multivarious fruits of evil as it inworks itself into the whole life of man. The familiar adage, *Corruptio optimi pessima*, finds its fullest illustration in the pictures of the Book of Genesis. These pictures in which we behold one good gift of God after another—the glorious bounties of Nature, the strong ties of blood, the blessed obligation of worship, the advances of civilization, the relation between the sexes, the law of daily food, the bonds of social and national life, all in turn transformed beneath the touch of evil, ministering in different ways to the spread of its terrible power.

"Each portion of the original gift is visited by an appropriate sentence after the Fall. In the sentence of death is involved the gradual weakening and ultimate deprivation of the endowments or image; whilst the loss of the Divine fellowship which lay at the back of the likeness, is plainly symbolized in the mandate of expulsion from Eden."

So much authority. And now apart from the vitiation of man's character, his propulsion forward into a new realm of trials, struggles, temptations, obscurity of vision, and arduous efforts of discovery, what effects

in this objective world of rocks, plants, and animals, might be expected from so portentous a moral cataclysm?

Speculations of this sort are unquestionably entertaining, though they put on perhaps the aspect of a too whimsical curiosity. The categories of this objective world, which Christian Philosophy usually accepts, may be summarized in the three divisions of the inorganic, the organic, and the mental world. How far would the Fall, the invasion of Sin affect any one of the three? If the objective world has a real existence outside of us, its percipients, then it would seem almost unquestionable that a moral and mental deterioration could not affect the inorganic world, the world of heat and light laws, the world of electricity, of crystallographic growth, the world of gravitation, of chemistry, of physical constants generally. Into this world *in esse* turpitude, stupidity, disease, can effect no entrance. It is inconceivable. Into the world of plants and animals disease and death has certainly convincing sway. Was it, could it ever have been otherwise? It is assuredly a puzzling conception to think of the plant world without insect pests, or indeed of a plant world without its poisonous elements (many of which by the way are most useful to man), or finally of a plant world which did not yield to change, in which plants did not wither and perish the victims of fungi, or the severity of the season.

Before the Fall were there no alternations of heat and cold, no summers, no winters, no frost? Was Eden a

region of meteorological placidity so absolute that even the laws of flowering and fruitage were suspended? And then with regard to animals. Before the Fall did they exist together in an ideal community of forgetfulness and love? Did the carnivorous beasts forget the lessons or the habits of their ages of evolution, and forego the nutrital necessities of eating their herbivorous brethren? And as to all of them did they present more pleasing pictures of comity and cleanliness than they do today? Was the essential obscenity of beasts expurgated, and a parlor behaviour substituted of agreeable forbearance and unassuming modesty? Is evolution a dream, or the projected hallucination of a metaphysical Logos? Before the Fall were there no poisonous reptiles, and can it be possible, as Bishop Patrick has said, that the snake walked in some way on his hinder parts? Is there not in all this a kind of rubbishy phantasmagory of ignorance and assumption? It is worth while however to go farther and see what the fathers of theology say about these strange matters.

That the patristic writers and the theological doctors and the various faculties of divinity assert the Fall is a commonplace of Christian theodicy, but what effect this momentous collapse had upon animated nature, or if it had any, is not so discernible in their utterances. Milton perchance has spoken with the most ingenuous and poetic simplicity, about the paradisaic conditions as they impressed organic life in that original Eden;

About them frisking play'd
All beasts of the earth, since wild, and of all chase
In wood or wilderness, forest or den;
Sporting the lion ramp'd, and in his paw
Dandled the kid; bears, tigers, ounces, pards,
Gamboll'd before them; the unwieldy elephant,
To make them mirth, used all his might, and wreathed
His lithe proboscis; close the serpent sly,
Insinuating wove with Gordian twine
His braided train, and of his fatal guile
Gave proof unheeded: others on the grass
Couch'd, and, now fill'd with pasture, gazing sat,
Or bedward ruminating; for the sun,
Declined, was hasting now with prone career
To the ocean isles; and, in the ascending scale
Of heaven, the stars that usher evening, rose.

Now this idyllic picture submitted to the attention of a zoological congress would be greeted with tempestuous laughter or be even more slightingly considered by contemptuous silence. It is ludicrously barren of any—the remotest scientific probability. However in this present essay the scruples, or the censure, or, for that matter the approval of Science is utterly negligible, as the suggestions finally urged are urged upon Christian assumptions, and are intended to have their weight only with orthodox Christian believers. And therefore as we are anxious to discover such traces of God's nature in His creation as will justify us in asserting His openness or accessibility to legitimate inquiry, and His compassionate consideration of importunate needs, and as the Christian dogma of a Fall, may have seriously impaired the validity of those traces, we are concerned to find out how far, *upon Christian authority*,

such a lesion of the primal perfection has obscured the divine lineaments in the natural world, *exclusive of man.* *

A search, perhaps not exhaustively conducted, does not give us such exact impressions as seem desirable. It is certainly quite conspicuous—interestingly so—how the early fathers and authorities of Christian professions, apologies, letters, epistles, tracts, and theses, dwell upon the human aspects of sin and elaborate the consequences of the Fall, with relation almost solely to the life, character and conduct of man, as an individual or in his social units. They are cognizant of the world of

*This from Ruskin (Modern Painters) has a most whimsical and curious beauty and tenderness

" 'To dress and to keep it.'

That then, was to be our work. Alas! what work have we set ourselves upon instead! How have we ravaged the garden instead of kept it—feeding our war-horses with its flowers, and splitering its trees into spear-shafts.

'And at the East a flaming sword.'

Is its flame quenchless, and are those gates that keep the way indeed passable no more, or is it not rather we no more desire to enter? For what can we conceive of that first Eden which we might not yet win back if we chose? It was a place full of flowers, we say. Well: the flowers are always striving to grow wherever we suffer them; and the fairer the closer. There may have been indeed a Fall of Flowers, as a Fall of Man; but assuredly creatures such as we are can now fancy nothing lovelier than roses and lilies, which would grow for us side by side, leaf overlapping leaf, till the Earth was white and red with them, if we cared to have it so. And Paradise was full of pleasant shades and fruitful avenues. Well: what hinders us from covering as much of the world as we like with pleasant shade and pure blossoms and goodly fruit? Who forbids its valleys to be covered with corn, till they laugh and sing? Who prevents its dark forests, ghostly and uninhabitable, from being changed into infinite orchards, wreathing the hills with frail-floretted snow, far away to the half-lighted horizon of April, and flushing the face of all the autumnal earth with glow of clustered food? But Paradise was a place of peace, we say, and all the animals were gentle servants to us. Well: the world would yet be a place of peace if we were all peacemakers, and gentle service should we have of its creatures if we gave them gentle mastery. But so long as we make sport of slaying bird and beast, so long as we choose to contend rather with our fellows than with our faults, and make battlefield of our meadows instead of pasture—so long truly, the Flaming Sword will still turn every way, and the gates of Eden remain barred close enough, till we have sheathed the sharper flame of our own passions, and broken down the closer gates of our own hearts."

beasts and plants, of birds and fishes, but their speech about this objective spectacle is childish, general, or simply the expressions of a grateful and delighted piety. There remains however a permissive conviction that in Christian dogmatics an indeterminate change in the organic creation universally as concerns the Earth, is postulated as a result of the Fall, while there may be more conclusively associated with the Creeds the assertion of an accentuated phenomenon of this sort, in a restricted area, known as the *Garden of Eden*, a primordial paradise.

In the Exposition of the Orthodox Faith by John of Damascus, in the chapter "Concerning Earth and its Products," we are told that "indeed, before the transgression, all things were under his (man's) power. For God had set him as ruler over all things on the earth and in the waters. Even the serpent was accustomed to man, and approached him more readily than it did other living creatures, and held intercourse with him with delightful motions. And hence it was through it that the devil, the prince of evil made his most wicked suggestion to our first parents. Moreover the earth of its own accord used to yield fruits for the benefits of the animals that were obedient to man, and there was neither rain nor tempest on the earth. But after the transgression when he was compared with the unintelligent cattle and became like to them, after he had contrived that in him irrational desire should have rule over reasoning mind and had become disobedient to the Master's command, the subject creation rose up against him whom the Creator appointed to be ruler."

Here is disclosed perhaps no loss of any especial excellence in the animal or vegetable world but only an injured allegiance, a fracture in the preestablished comity between nature and man, which would entail the development of conflict, but in no important respect deface their physical charm, their aesthetic fascination.

In a letter from Theophilus to Autolycus we read "but the things which were in Paradise were made of a superior loveliness and beauty, since in it the plants were said to have been planted by God. As to the rest of the plants, indeed the world contained plants like them, but the two trees—the tree of life and the tree of knowledge—the rest of the earth possessed not, but only Paradise," which again simply attributes a more glowing loveliness to the occupants of the strangely beautiful and mystical theatre, in which was enacted the tragedy of the Fall.

Lactantius does in The Divine Institutes, intimate a reflected badness in the world in its pernicious creatures, saying "we must here reply to the philosophers, and especially to Cicero, who says 'Why should God, when He made all things on our account, make so large a quantity of snakes and vipers?'" and he finds, "since man is formed of different and opposing elements, soul and body, that is, heaven and earth, that which is slight and that which is perceptible to the senses, that which is eternal and that which is temporal, that which has sensibility and that which is senseless, that which is endued with light and that which is dark, reason itself and necessity require that both good and evil things should be set before man."

But in no such sense as Man had fallen from his pristine glory, had the defacing poison of deterioration and decay affected the animate creation. So far as the Fall changed the relations of men to the natural world or the natural world to them, Novatian, in speaking of the Jewish Meats, says, "the only food for the first men was fruit and the produce of the trees. For afterwards man's sin transferred his need from the fruit trees to the produce of the earth, when the very attitude of his body attested the condition of his conscience. For although innocency raised men up towards heavens to pluck their food from the trees so long as they had a good conscience, yet sin when committed bent men down to the earth, and to the ground to gather its grain. Moreover afterwards the use of the flesh was added, the divine favour supplying for human necessities the kinds of meats generally fitting for suitable occasions. For while a more tender meat was needed to nourish men who were both tender and unskilled, it was still a food not prepared without toil, doubtless for their advantage, lest they should again find a pleasure in sinning, if the labour imposed upon sin did not exhort innocence. And since now it was no more a paradise to be tended, but a whole world to be cultivated, the more robust food of flesh is offered to men, that for the advantage of culture something more might be added to the vigour of the human body."

Novatian rebels against any imputation of uncleanness to animals, as a reflexion impossible to consider upon God, His power and His honesty, and he continues in a strain of most curious imagination and symbolism:

that "when it results that not only were the animals not condemned by their Creator because of his agency; but that men might be instructed in the brutes to return to the unspotted nature of their own creation, for we must consider how the Lord distinguishes clean and not clean. The creatures that are clean, it says, both chew the cud and divide the hoof, the unclean do neither, or only one of the two. All these things were made by one Workman, and He who them Himself blessed them is holy, and these things which were created are not in fault in being that which they were made. For it has never been customary for nature, but for a perverted will, to bear the blame of guilt. What then is the case? In the animals it is the characters and doings, and will of men that are depicted. They are clean if they chew the cud; that is, if they ever have in their mouths as food the divine precepts. They divide the hoof, if with the firm step of innocency they tread the ways of righteousness, and of every virtue of life. For of these creatures which divide the foot into two hoofs, the walk is always vigorous, the tendency to slip of one part of the hoof being sustained by the firmness of the other, and so retained in the substantial foot-step.

"Then in the animals, by the law as it were, a certain mirror of human life is established, wherein men may consider the images of penalties; so that everything which is vicious in men, as committed against nature, may be the more condemned, when even these things, although naturally ordained in brutes, are in them blamed. For that in fishes the roughness of the scales is regarded as constituting their cleanness; roughened,

rugged, and unpolished and substantial, and grave manners are approved in men; while those that are without scales are unclean; because trifling, and fickle and faithless, and effeminate manners are disapproved. Moreover what does the law mean when it says—Thou shalt not eat the camel?—except that by the example of that animal it condemns a life nerveless and crooked with crimes. Or when it forbids the swine to be taken for food? It assuredly reproves a life filthy and dirty, and delighting in the garbage of vice, placing its supreme good not in generosity of mind, but in the flesh alone. Or when it forbids the hare? It rebukes men deformed into women. And who would use the body of the weazel for food? But in this case it reproves theft. Who would eat the lizard? But it hates an aimless waywardness of life. Who the eft? But it execrates mental strains. Who would eat the hawk, who the kite, who the eagle? But it hates plunderers and violent people who live by crime. Who the vulture? But it holds accursed those who seek for booty by the death of others. Or who the raven? But it holds accursed crafty wills. Moreover when it forbids the sparrow it condemns intemperance, when the owl it hates those who fly from the light of truth; when the swan, the proud with high neck; when the sea-mew, too talkative an intemperance of tongue; when the bat, those who seek the darkness of night as well as of error. These things then, and the like to these, the law holds accursed in animals, which in them indeed are not blameworthy, because they are born in this condition." It is evident here that the

writer while he may have conceded that a certain lapse in nature and natural products may have succeeded the Fall, or been its consequence, and that thereby a curious reflection of the imperfections of men was inserted in nature for their correction or admonishment still there is not implied any catastrophic subversion of nature, so that the aims and the qualities of its Creator are utterly hidden or distorted. And doubtless Novatian, as other authorities, regarded Eden as a restricted place, with its idyllic conditions limited to the enviable occupants alone of that beatific enclosure.

Lactantius (On the Workmanship of God) says a great deal about the natural provisions in animals for their protection and successful propagation, and animadverts hopefully, and wisely too, upon man's apparent feebleness and helplessness at his entrance upon the world, but seems nowhere to depict any consequences to the natural world by reason of the Fall. His biology, if it can be so dignified, in this treatise is of course utterly crude.

St. Augustine in his City of God, says "but it is ridiculous to condemn the faults of beasts and trees and other such mortal and mutable things as are void of intelligence, sensation or life, even though these faults should destroy their corruptible nature; for these creatures received, at their creator's will, an existence fitting them, by passing away and giving place to others, to secure that lowest form of beauty, the beauty of seasons which in its own place is a requisite part of the world."

Irenaeus in Against Heresies, speaks of clean and

unclean beasts, but Tertullian emphasizes the "good" and "very good" in Genesis. Minucius Felix in The Octavius offers this homage to animal intelligence—"how much more truly do the dumb animals naturally judge concerning your gods? Mice, swallows, kites, know that they have no feeling: they gnaw them, they trample them, they sit upon them; and unless you drive them off, they build their nests in the very mouth of your god. Spiders indeed weave their webs over his face, and suspend their threads from his very head."

Origen in his contentions with Celsus had some difficulties with that opponent by reason of the latter's rather profuse naturalistic tendencies and illustrations, for Celsus claims that man is made as much for animals as animals for man, saying, "why were we not rather created on their account, since they hunt and devour us?" which Origen answers by averring the growth and development of understanding, how to cope with wild animals and subdue them or tame them, saying "yet what does it all avail to prove that in the beginning men were mostly captured and devoured by wild beasts, while wild beasts were never caught by men. For since the world was created in conformity with the will of Providence, and God presided over the universe of things, it was necessary that the elements of the human race should, at the commencement of its existence, be placed under some protection of the higher powers, so that there might be formed, from the beginning, a union of the divine nature with that of men*** for it was probable that in the beginning of the world's existence human nature would be assisted to a greater degree

(than afterwards), until progress had been made towards the attainment of understanding and the other virtues, and the invention of the arts, and they should thus be able to maintain life of themselves, and no longer stand in need of superintendents."

Origen indeed regarded the description of Eden as allegorical, saying "and the other statements which follow, which might of themselves lead a candid reader to see that all these things had not inappropriately an allegorical meaning," nor does he seem to attach the curse laid upon Adam to have reference generally to the other inhabitants of the earth, nor to have had any sensible influence on the contents of Creation.

Certainly Luther casts no imputation on Nature, except Man's, by the Fall (See Hagenbach History of Doctrine), and though the emphasis laid by Protestant theologians upon the moral consequences of the Fall exceeds the seriousness of the view of the Roman Catholics—as in the opinion of these latter the Fall, "caused only the loss of the gifts of divine grace, the natural consequences of which are man's weakness and imperfection,"—yet the Protestant authorities seem unwilling, or are unable, to impute much declination from its absolutely original state, as created, of the animal, the vegetable, the organic world. The point seems to be entirely to lay stress upon the degradation of Man, who by an inversion of essence was emptied of the superadded virtues or powers, which as a free gift God had bestowed upon him at first. Man lost power, splendor of parts and mind, while of course he ran violently into the courses of Sin, and contracted the

disease of Death. The natural world was subjugated by him or to him (probably in any modern sense a most irrational guess) and when he fell he abdicated and lost his kingship (See Harnack's History of Dogma).

It is certainly a bewildering maze of discussion to which one is introduced in following the intricacies and devious threads of interpretation, the luxuriant wilderness of fancies, hair-splitting definitions, and redundant phraseology which those who attempted to express "mysteries too great for words" struggled with, in forming Catholic or Christian creed. The effervescent imaginations of philosopher, poet, and mystic, mingled with erudition and not unmixed with nonsense, contributed to heterodoxy, heresy, and schism, and a very strong impression is gained from the whole matter that some sort of entrenched authority was a fierce necessity to keep the Christian faith reasonable and sane. As Ernest Myers says of Milton, the early fathers of theology made "Man the central person of a drama of the action of Gods, involving the mightiest powers of Heaven and Hell."

They did not dwell upon the possible effects of the Fall as obscuring God in the natural world. They had scant time, less inclination, and no knowledge to make much of a case out of it. Science could today make a better showing, with its formula of natural conditions as expressed in Jack London's words; the animal "must master or be mastered; while to show mercy is a weakness; mercy does not exist in the primordial life; it is misunderstood for fear, and such misunderstanding makes for death. Kill or be killed, eat or be eaten, is

the law; and this mandate, down out of the depths of Time, the animal obeys.*** The animal is a killer, a thing that preys, living on the things that live, unaided, alone, by virtue of his own strength and prowess surviving triumphantly in a hostile environment where only the strong survive. *** There is a patience of the wild—dogged, tireless, persistent as life itself—that holds motionless for endless hours the spider in its web, the snake in its coils, the panther in its ambuscade: this patience belongs peculiarly to life when it hunts its living food."

Such a view, the outcome of modern nature-study might have attracted St. Augustine's mind, as offering an exact and rational prolongation of the moral consequences of the Fall in the realm of nature. But as far as we know, nothing of the kind was insisted on by the Christian fathers and authorities. Cardinal Newman in his eloquent "Antony in Conflict," states that the early church "conceived the devil to be allowed that power over certain brute animals which Scripture sometimes assigns to him," and he adds "surely there is nothing abstractedly absurd in considering certain hideous developments of nature as tokens of the presence of the unseen author of evil, as soon as we once admit that he exists. Certainly the sight of a beast of prey, with his malevolent passions, savage cruelty, implacable rage, malice, cunning, sullenness, restlessness, brute hunger, irresistible strength, though there cannot be any sin in any of these qualities themselves, awakens very awful and complicated musings in a religious mind. Thus a philosophical view of nature

would be considered, in the times I speak of, to corroborate the method of Scripture interpretation which those same times adopted." *

On the other hand there is no counting the innumerable illustrations of the enthusiasm of Christian authors over the beneficence and beauty of the world, and the illimitable reflections it suggests over the power and the goodness of God. Perhaps these effusions are more numerous among Protestants, or simply lay pietists than in the ranks of the Catholic essayists, and hence have no weight as expositions of the Christian idea, but they are by no means wanting in the latter.

And to make the whole matter incontestable, affirming for it the traditions of the Roman church, I find in this allocution to the Natural World, with all its appanages of living things, masonry of parts, and exquisite articulation, the exact adequate proof that in the theological sense of Christianity, whatever derangement the Animate Creation suffered by reason of the Fall, the attributes of God are therein still lucidly discerned.

Cardinal John Edward Manning has written (Divine Grace over all the Earth); "*the whole world* is the reflection of the presence and of the perfection of God. The reason and the conscience, rightly exercised, can see and read His existence, His glory and His Godhead

*Huxley observant of the sad moral disarray in the natural world has amusingly said "I apprehend that no one is seriously prepared to maintain that the ghosts of all the myriads of generations of herbivorous animals which lived during the millions of years of the earth's duration, before the appearance of man, and which have all that time been tormented and devoured by carnivores, are to be compensated by a perennial existence in clover: while the ghosts of carnivores are to go to some kennel where there is neither a pan of water nor a bone with any meat on it."

in the *works of His hands*. Again, the Psalmist says, speaking of God; 'He hath set His tabernacle in the sun; and again, He cometh forth out of the ends of heaven, and His circuit goeth to the end thereof again.' There is no one that can hide himself from the heat thereof. That is the glory, and the majesty, and the love of God, fill the whole world, pervade all things, all men are encompassed by it. No man can hide himself from the love and from the glory of God. Go where he may, if he walk upon the earth, God is there; if he ascend into heaven, He is there before him. Every living soul therefore has an illumination of God in the *order of nature*, by the light of conscience, and by the light of reason, and by the working of the Spirit of God in his head and in his heart."

And has not the Catholic service retained the *Benedicite omnia opera Domini*, the *Coeli enarrant, Domini est terra, Laudate Dominum*, out of the Psalms of David as poems of adoration in which the singer's fervor grows from the depth of his delight, the leaping joy of his love for the beautiful earth, and its enlivening progenies?

So we may now pass without misgivings, that in such an inquiry we are gainsaying the assent of the theological faculties, to the important investigation how far the world as a product of a Creator's will, and mind and desire, furnishes us with evidence that He is susceptible to our cry for light, and our incessant bewildering clamor, whether He exists or not. We should not deny ourselves any hopes that this evidence affords, but with every mortal expedient and in some universal

and concerted manner, present them in an appeal, of such convincing force, that He, whose possession of reason and compassion, we believe it can be shown the Earth demonstrates, must as a logical necessity of his own nature answer, or else—shall we be compelled to say *HE EXISTS NOT.*

And in so far as this experiment is underlaid by the Christian hypothesis—to which we obediently assent—and in all its phases, its antecedents, methods and results, involves the Christian sentiment, Christian utilities, and Christian imagery, it will be also a proof of the Christian position itself.

The treatment accorded to the doctrine of The Fall, in a portion of the foregoing pages, might appear deserving only of sarcastic comment. But as a contribution to the Aryan myth making element of religion, considered so important by Mr. Chamberlain (Foundations of the Nineteenth Century), it is entitled to consideration and serious analysis, along the lines of theological deduction, as respects the Natural World, precisely as we have treated it here. Chamberlain regards the myth making power of the race distinctively as an element of religious beauty, and contrasts the mytho-poetic tendency with the dogma-enslaving practice of what he calls "the specifically Roman dogma-mongering."

A paragraph of Mr. Chamberlain's perhaps elucidates the sort of dignity he attributes to this theme. "In the twenty-ninth chapter of his book *On Prayer*, Origines speaks of the myth of the Fall of Man, and makes the remark: 'We cannot help observing that the

credulity and inconstancy of Eve did not begin at the moment when she disregarded the word of God and listened to the serpent, they were manifestly present before, and the serpent came to her, because in its cunning it had already noticed her weakness.' With this one sentence the myth—which the Jews, as Renan rightly remarked, compressed into a dry historical fact—is once more awakened to life. And with the myth, nature slips into its rights. That which may be called sin, as soon as we aim at something higher, belongs to us as Paul had already said, 'by nature'; with the fetters of the chronicle we throw off the fetters of credulous superstition, we no longer stand opposed to all nature as something strange, something that has been born higher but has fallen lower, we rather belong to nature, and we cast back upon it the light of grace that fell into our human heart. By carrying on the Pauline thought Origines here liberated science and at the same time pushed back the bolt that shut the heart to true, direct religion."

Therefore as a purely metaphysical ratiocination a research into the official views of Christianity as to the obscuring effects by such a Fall of the evidences of God's presence in Nature, was reasonable, even though, considered as a practical, so to say naturalistic question, it only becomes a piece of absurd erudition. Our contention was simple enough. Is God open to the approaches of emotion and reason, uniting in a request of momentous import, to His supplicants? The organization and expression of the World permit us to think so. But inasmuch as we are entering the whole ques-

tion on the basis of Christian propositions or fundamentals, did the Fall affect the visible world to such an extent as to forbid these otherwise natural inferences? The authorities do not seem to think so. We were then justified to repeat our confidence in the assurances the Natural World appears to offer of God's accessibility in such a matter.

CHAPTER III

A Silent or a Speaking God (Continued)

In looking at the world as the purposive work of a Creator, there are apparent in it two prominent characters which we emphasize as indicating qualities in its Maker, favorable for our ends. These are order and beauty. The reign of Law and the aesthetic expression of Nature. It would hardly seem necessary to relate these at any length, and yet their significance is not fully appreciated, as bearing out our contention, without a few illustrative examples wherein the vagueness of a general and diffused statement gains distinctness from a concrete instance.

And in the first place if we consider the universality of Law in the Universe, how from top to bottom its inexorable fiats prohibit chance, determine process, controlling the play of nebulae and the biological history of an ascidian, we are at first plunged into a humility and an abjectness of wonder before the immensity of a Mind that conceived or inaugurated so terrific and august a result. On any *a priori* grounds it seems difficult to think that such a Creator would belittle or vulgarize His eminence by stooping to our needs. We do indeed seem a little different from the rest of the animal world at least, and we do seem to be in a measure free to choose; exceptionable aspects of ourselves which might induce for us some leniency of

consideration at His hands. Yet on the other hand we are in our attributes not separated by much from the mammalia of which we are ordinally a family, and in all respects we are forlornly feeble, dependent, and perishable. The splendid tyranny of Law ruling exquisitely in all the minutest phenomena of matter, and keeping together in the whole cosmic sweep of its coercion the hosts of heaven, speaks of a Designer, who must be, by all ordinary tokens, infinitely removed from us, our conceptions, our understanding, our nature.

Our aspirations, let them run ever so high, our achievements though they imprison some infinitesimal element of natural force, our reason though it dissolves a portion of the obscurity around us, still leave us powerless in action, failing to free us from the ignominy of being simply experimentalists, watchers, itinerant observers of a domain we occupy by sufferance, from which we disappear by disease. Now as a matter of fact Christianity relieves this situation by bringing its retinue of homiletics by which it affirms that we are not only the recipients of a Revelation but the justification of Creation.

In the twinkling of a moment our former modesty is replaced by a not unconscious boastfulness, by an assumed suzerainty which, as things are now, something more than the documents of Christianity must either bolster up or banish. It is this "something more" we are here in search of, but we are in search of it on the grounds of the Christian hypothesis, *and because of it.* If in this book we are planning a great experimental demand, worked out on a colossal scale, that God again

declare Himself, it is because in the first place Christianity asserts His existence, and furthermore asserts that we are objects of His attention and in the second place that we are overwhelmingly in need of such a declaration, and that the Maker of a Law-controlled world proclaims in that Law—His own institution—that He is open to reason.

Observe we could not see acquiescence in the plan we propose except from Christian believers who assume God's care for us, and we might without troubling ourselves with further argument as to the implications of the Law and Beauty of the world, simply ask them to inaugurate the experiment we have designed, on the grounds of the tenets they profess. But then we should run the risk of too prejudiced an answer to our petition. We would be told that our experiment is an impertinence, if not a profanity, the parable of Dives and Lazarus would be repeated, with its injunction "though one rise from the dead," our attitude would be denounced as meddlesome and unnecessary, we should be told to have faith and wait. But if we can claim on grounds outside of Revelation, that the Maker of the world of Law must be *ipso facto* supremely sensitive to reason, then on broader grounds than the limitations, or, the misinterpretations of Revelation, we are entitled to ask Christians, and to expect them, to put that reason to the test. This is our procedure.

Now as to Law proving the reasonableness of God. The Creator of a Universe ordered and run by law at every point and process of its economy is in analogy, at an incomparable distance, with the inventor who

makes a machine whose whole movement is governed exactly by the form and relation of its parts. The perfection of a great reciprocating engine with all its separate elements in perfect control is a law-regulated structure, and the mind—we were almost willing to assert the temperament of—its author obtains a coincident illustration in the mind of a Creator of a Universe, all of whose aspects bend to the dominion of law. Why? Both of these organisms are designs, that move in one way, and one way only, and accomplish one result. They are comprehensive conceptions which in the minds of their inventors dwell as ideas, seen in all their shifting phases, as they operate and display their inevitable physical consequences. The foreordained harmony of parts produces a number of lesser and greater movements in both, which are so regulated, so cooperative, that the combination issues successfully in a predestined upshot or conclusion.

It is not dissonant with this statement that the machine of its human author may have been an experimental result, the crowning achievement of a line of rudimentary machines which started by similar minds in the past have culminated in the supreme example today, in a process of mental evolution inseparable from the foiled and limping progress of human work. Nor further is it dissonant with this statement that the machine exemplifies in its construction and operation laws previously imposed upon the universe. The point of emphasis, and it can be made emphatic, in spite of the affected disdain for the old time comparison of the watch-maker and the creator of a world, is this.

We are *not* engaged in establishing the proof of design in the universe from the Paley argument of a design in a machine, but insisting on the psychological identity of a creator, who creates a world—this is the Christian dogma—and the man who constructs a mechanism, functioning throughout a nexus of related parts to one end, which is accurately realized. In both there is an ideal. It may not be completely realized; some observers believe the world could have been improved, even in its mechanical and physical adjustments. With both there is a reasonable control of the material involved in construction. And when the object of thought is finished there is in both appreciation of its excellence, and a thorough-going understanding of its action, its management, and its correction.

It is this illuminated state of the mind that we discover to be a crowning feature in the inventor and creator, and it accompanies—if our claim of an analogy is correct—a certain characteristic genial readiness to explain, to elucidate, to furnish the doubter, the inquirer—if the doubt and the inquiry are sincere and intelligent and persistent—an explanation. This condition of mind is inevitable, it is psychologic. It is based primarily on necessity.

It is inconceivable that a rational agent working through its own resources of thought and invention and of course working to attain desirable ends on its completion of a design could be animated by any other wishes than to demonstrate and distinguish and define the latter's action, its powers, and its construction.

Of course we are speaking of abstract and absolutely disenfranchised free, noble states of intention. The machine thus created is understood not to be a trick, a substitution, is not made for market purposes to outwit rivals, or to secure fraudulent deceitful results. It is a purely intellectual effort. As such its author remains unreservedly and delightedly its delineator, its expositor, and promulgator.

The affectations of mystery, the shroud of concealment for the purpose of his supposititious aggrandizement, an obscurity intended to give him an irrelevant and foolish importance, are foreign and fatal to his mental eminence, to the freedom of his will and his self respect, are utterly inconsistent with the loftiness of his ideals. He works in an unvitiated ether of conceptions. Still there is a limital virtue to his generous impulses. He demands reciprocal intelligence. He asks for some conditioned evenness of mind in his audience. If the fabric he has formed demands justification, is an affirmation of mind that challenges other minds for their homage of admiration and endorsement, its explanation can only legitimately be forced from him by those ardent enough, and qualified, to comprehend it. He must be mute before those who cannot understand, who mistake his words, or are dumbfounded and simply opaque before his expositions.

It would be preposterous for instance to ask Dr. Paul R. Heyl to define in words his remarkable recent demonstration of the speed of ultra-violet light waves in vacuum before an audience of Russian moujiks, just

as it would be useless for any practical ends of edification, to explain to children Prof. Pupin's system for the reinforcement of telephone transmission.

But still the inventor, the creator must in essence crave recognition, the very innateness of his self-expression secures its satisfaction through its intellectual reception by others. Amongst imperfect men and women less creditable motives intervene, and contaminate the original pure impulse of mental joy before a good result, an intentioned response to thought. We know what they are, vanity, ambition, conceit, gain, flattery, promotion, etc., a string of motives inseparable from our human life. This does not hide the ultimate inevitableness of the mind's exultation in sympathy.

And now further. On this earth almost all human inventions serve a human purpose, their usufruct means more happiness or more knowledge, their makers are forever crowned with human gratitude, they are steps in human progress, and they linger in an atmosphere of benevolence. The most abstruse scientific device is a contribution to knowledge and forever marks a new enclosure of understanding, and the industrial engines suddenly develop immense possibilities of living. They each are benefactions. They can only be construed as benignities of genius. Now the attitude to them as such of the inventor or the creator, is suffused with generous emotion. He delights, to the inquiring gaze, to make clear their features, to accentuate their work, their utility, to recount their history, their development, their implications; each new question,

earnestly made, starts reminiscent associations, and the inventive mind dwells with recurrent emphasis on the principles, the details, and the products of his thoughtful work. In short in the inventor we see a nature spurred on to the declaration of its own activity and incorrigibly responsive to the scrutiny and appeal of those of its own nature, as to the meaning and genius of its work.

Now according to the Christian hypothesis—upon which this whole suggestion rests,—God created the universe, and at any rate this particular portion in which we find ourselves, in which, as Mivart says, "amongst the multitude of mineral, and especially of crystalline species which compose it, most definite and ceaseless order reigns," and wherein also in all its life manifestations a vast process of organic evolution rules with tyrannous power. It is a stupendous aggregate of systems within systems, running on its huge and co-eternal course without stoppage and without error, and with a certain terrifying monotony like the ceaseless and calculable movements of a Corliss engine. If so, the mental attributes we have spent a little time in describing above, also adhere to its author. We are led the more to this postulation as the Christian church affirms as its most copious text of consolation to its adherents God's interest in us, His woefully smaller and yet congenial *simulacra*.

And it can be no longer assumed that our state of knowledge, our rudimentary and self-satisfied ignorance, the sort of thing which stood for knowledge some centuries ago, prohibits us from offering a most intelli-

gent, respectful, and sympathetic hearing, if the Creator, the inventor of this wonderful cosmos, listening to our petitions, not querulous, nor sobbing, nor stupid, nor minatory, but devout and earnest, will announce something that will make it clearer; if He will at least *promulgate Himself* as its CAUSE. For, as it happens in this case, we are not so much in darkness as to the mechanism and movements of the machine, as we are to its origin. We are also involved in the "going" of this vast engine, and Our Predicament, stated in the first chapter, is sincere since while ourselves in the design, our position is critical and inquisitive, as if some springs in a great machine were at times sufficiently freed from the operations of the machine, of which they were integral parts, to ask "why are we here and who did it and are we likely to remain here until the machine breaks down and that ends *it*, and *Us*."

In the illustration enforced above, as to the natural desire of the inventor to elucidate his machine or invention as a mental satisfaction inseparable from the mental workings of his own brain we regarded himself and his audience as outside of the machine, as the machine as an object to them both before which they stood as disinterested observers. But in the case of the world and our reasonable needs of explanation from its Creator, we are entangled in the machine itself; we are a part of it and while involved in its relentless operations are yet permitted to become, partially at least, its interpreters and as actual spectators are watching its movements as tangible results beyond us, and in their scrutiny have become eagerly importunate to

know more as to their origin, their meanings, and their end. Now it would seem that the willingness, the esoteric hunger of the inventor to display the perfection of his machine to sympathetic receptive minds, would become an emotional craving almost, if actually portions of that machine were conscious and responsive units. The motive with him to explain, in their case, would incorporate the mental satisfaction and the sentiment of compassionate regard, of moral obligation, as well, and sensibly thereby take on a coercive power which would move him to very explicit and informing council.

At this point enters a distracting and important consideration viz. the imperfection of the machine. Here we awaken a different series of motives and emotions, which might very much modify the previous energies of communication between the inventor and his audience either outside or inside the machine. Humanly speaking it is a matter of extreme mortification to confess a defeated purpose; it is the most unpleasant of all tasks to be compelled to advertise and make clear the particular blunders of conception, or of construction which invalidate the workmanship we expected to advance, as a miracle of excellence. And perhaps, we may advertently remark, it is the more disagreeable as the reputation of the inventor is high. At once there emerge reasons for silence, though it could be insisted the reasons were discreditable or cowardly. But to most men the reasons for silence are right, as the inventor may intend to learn from experience and failure to improve his workmanship, and,

before confessing failure, he prepares for a more successful venture.

Do we find some reflection of this state of things in the world? in God? On the Christian assumptions—and we stick to them—it is incredible, impossible, a strange vagary of impertinence and profanity so to speak or think. And yet. This earth, wonderful in a thousand ways, immensely interesting in all its physical aspects, furnishing mental pabulum to the omnivorous curiosity of men, fascinating as a dream in its history, and enriching poetry, fable, romance, philosophy, with the diverse threads of its phenomena; this world as a moral spectacle, indeed as a spiritual spectacle, is defective. This is certainly obvious. And why? There is but one answer. Again the Christian polemic. It is Sin. Defacement enters with it and stays with it. The machine divinely made, cannot be accorded the note of supremacy, it is marred somehow, and in its highest realms of action is faulty. Does this violation of what should have been a perfect work embarrass its Creator, or persuade Him to refuse us the more definite revelation we seem now to desire? Has the disappointment issued in our permanent obscurity? Or will the powerful process of evolution work a metamorphosis, or a new creation, wherein the errors will be remedied and God, exonerated by a new experiment, appear luminously before the eyes of men?

These are fruitless questions. They need not be made. For our purpose God—following the Christian creed—has accepted the authorship of the universe; an explanation—allegorical or real—has been revealed,

but today under the influence of illumination and science, the thought of the age asks for a reiteration and an explanation more commensurate with our intelligence and expectation. The very misdirection of so vast and wonderful a universe is itself a baffling mystery and inasmuch as it comprehends all lesser and determined phases of device, as the life of plants and animals, the rise and decline of geological ages, the birth of planets, the questions we ask, finally land us before the ultimate ones IS THERE A GOD? HOW WAS THE WORLD MADE? WHAT IS ITS MEANING? WHAT ARE WE? WHENCE? WHITHER? WHY? Returning to our simile of the human inventor, this mortal author, if by some chance he had started a machine which possessed the aptitude to run for many years without stopping, and if, leaving it in some uninhabited region, he had watched from a distance, or in some sort of disguise, the wondering approach of men and women around it; if the numbers of these by settlement increased, and if the anomalous and marvellous machine, still doing its work uninterruptedly, continued to awaken their amazement and queries, with regard to itself, its origin, and its author; if further innumerable and very clever guesses had been ventured, and the growing population around the humming and tireless machine fell into more or less bitter wrangles over it, would he not be impelled—unless actuated by mere drollery or a proud exclusive disdain—by the motives above rehearsed, and by his sympathy to come forward and acknowledge his work, make it clear, and exhibit its purpose? We certainly believe he would, and it is a psychological error to say he would not.

All of the foregoing considerations are intended to assert the reasonableness of the inventor or the creator of a great well contrived—even if in some respects imperfect—machine, whose intrinsic wonderfulness gives glory to its inventor, and extorts admiration from its students, and that reasonableness, as a logical consequence, makes him also ideally communicative. The objection might be made with reference to drawing any parallel between this human inventor and God that the inventor and his audience are both the same sort of beings, while God is an "intelligence not only beyond all our possible powers of imagination, but beyond all human conception" (Mivart). To which the obvious answer is, that on the terms and the allegations of the Christian revelation—and we are going by that—"God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

"So God created man in His own image; in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them." After that all analogies drawn from human antecedents and conduct, must have an accredited weight. Before now passing to the contemplation of the beauty of the world as inducing a belief, nay a proof, of the powers of *compassion* in God, let us for a moment regard the organization of the world or the universe as the counterpart of a machine.

A machine means a motor, a combination of parts moving harmoniously and reciprocally together, and

work done. As Prof. Vinton has defined them there are machines destined to exercise great pressure, and others to entertain movement. The former are illustrated in the wedge and the lever, but in their operation there must be motion although of a restricted and, so to speak, a stationary nature, with the consequent emergence of pressure. Usually we associate the idea of a machine with motion and work, and the motion has to do with the transference of heavy bodies from one point to another. Again there is Carnot's ideal "reversible" heat engine, wherein—assuming the indestructibility of Heat—an engine "which converts a certain quantity of the heat spent upon it into work, lets the rest down from the boiler to the condenser, and spends upon it the same amount of work with the result of taking back the heat of the condenser, adding thereto the heat-equivalent of the work so spent, and thus restoring the whole of its original loss in heat to the boiler."

Regarded in these physical terms we are told (The Unseen Universe; Stewart and Tait) that the "visible universe may with perfect truth be compared to a vast heat-engine; the sun is the furnace or source of high-temperature-heat of our system, just as the stars are for other systems, and the energy which is essential to our existence is derived from the heat which the sun radiates, and represents only an excessively minute portion of that heat." This heat-engine of the universe runs down, as is now a familiar speculation, unless the new substance Radium with its incomparable powers of self-support will indefinitely prolong its life.

It is not however so much to a technical engine abstractly considered, that we wish to compare the world. It is in the more generalized sense as a composition of parts, an harmonious movement, and an effective work-producing organ, that we pause an instant to regard it.

Its motion is at first the most stupendous and obvious fact. That motion gives the night and the day, the seasons, and induces a universal distribution of life over its surface. It is a regulated motion, and the path the round earth describes, in its revolution about the sun, is a fixed one. This motion is participated in by the other elements of our solar system, and their centre of revolution like the earth's, is the sun, while they also partake of an axial change like the earth's. Viewed in the mass this presents a distinctly machine-like effect, in which the passive resistances—friction and shock—are reduced to a minimum, indeed seem almost absent, so that the result appears perpetual. It has remarkable symmetry, and acts and reacts with automatic and beautiful precision. The work done consists in the translation of the enormous bulks represented in the combined mass of all the planets. If this combination is studied more closely we discover that a repetition of the underlying scheme is repeated on a smaller scale in the planets themselves, in so far as they also have assembled about them lesser tributary satellites, governed also by unfailing rectitude of motion.

When we pass to the surface of the earth itself, we find a relativity of action which while for the most part involved in fostering life, still confirms our first impres-

sion of a machine less mechanically interpreted. We find in the first place a regulated exchange of the water from the surface of the earth to the skies and its return, this producing clouds, blankets of mist, and an aerial humidity, by which the heat of the earth is conserved, while constant precipitations minister to the growth of its plant and animal inhabitants. This hydraulic engine, as it might be called, discharges its functions perfectly—its motor force being the heat of the sun—and performs an incalculable amount of work.

We discover next an atmosphere delicately balanced for the respiration of oxygen-consuming organisms, which balance, by a most discrete device, is held in equipoise through the reciprocating action of animals and plants, the animals avoiding carbonic anhydride gas, which is a food for the plants, who in their digestion return the oxygen to the progressively exhausted air, and thus keep replenished the supply of oxygen for the animals. This equipoise is again an example of a machine-like reciprocation, and the volume of air is kept in motion through winds, tempests and currents, set agoing by the sun's heat.

We see covering the earth at every point, and adapted for their contrasted habitats, animals and plants, each one of which can be readily classified as a machine, but whose interaction is a compact chain of metamorphoses, whereby an enormous colossal life-engine is undeviatingly and uninterruptedly kept in motion. The plants feed the animals, supplying the fuel for their combustion processes in which life with a retinue of machine-like sequences is concerned; the animals feed the plants

mostly by the exhalation of the carbonic anhydride gas, partly by defecation and decay—the sum total of returned material equalling the sum total of consumption, very nearly—and the series of phases is complete. Theoretically and originally the machine was ideal and self-compensating, but the human tribe, who are part of the machine, and yet its percipients, have developed a psychic life, which eventuating in something called civilization, have not only disordered the balance—though the disorder up to the present time is inappreciable—but now by the strangest paradox ever witnessed in machine construction, have become inquisitors of the machine of which they are a part, and ask who made it and why they are in it.

Were we more intently to peruse the stages of organic evolution, and enumerate, as Wallace says "the numerous complex and delicate adaptations of inorganic nature, without which it is impossible for life either to exist now or to have been developed during the immeasurable past," we should come before a mechanism of checks and controls, motors and movements, which, although developmental in character, could be referred appropriately to the conception of a machine, as consisting of the harmonious working of related and invaginated parts, and as doing work.

One of the elements that has been concerned in a portion of that work is the tides, which in their flux and reflux, in their translation of the superficial masses of the oceans over and up and down upon the surface of the earth present the rhythm of the alternating advance and retreat of a mechanical surface.

In the domain of chemistry, in the new and startling light thrown upon the constitution of matter, we encounter a wholly marvellous mechanical system in the atom. As Fleeming Jenkins has written (quoted by Sir William Thomson) "the existence of the chemical atom, already quite a complex little world seems very probable; and the description of the Lucretian atom is wonderfully applicable to it. We are not wholly without hope that the real magnitude of each such atom may some day be known—not merely relative weight of the several atoms, but the number in a given volume of any material; that the form and motion of the parts of each atom and the distances by which they are separated may be calculated: that the motions by which they produce heat, electricity and light may be illustrated by exact geometrical diagrams: and that the fundamental properties of the intermediate and possibly constituent medium may be arrived at. Then the motion of planets and the music of the spheres will be neglected for a while in admiration of the maze in which the tiny atoms run."

It has been reserved for the great Swedish chemist, Arrhenius, to propound a majestic theory, as to the systole and diastole of the whole universe, which establishes a comparison of it to the alternate expansions and contractions of a steam motor. The slow retardation of movement in the orbital motion of the planets of our system contracts their paths, and they slowly draw near to the centre of the system. With accelerated velocity they sweep across space and finally the whole system collapses, through stages of

increasing violence and disruption; planet after planet plunges into the vortex of the consuming sun. With every fresh arrival the sun's mass is enlarged, and such stupendous thermal additions made that the yet inviolate orbs respond to its terrific impact and gain themselves enormously in heat. The course of the planetary tragedy terminates when the last world enters the nebulous glory that then extends outward to the limits of the former solar system, now lost in this intense revolution. The huge conglomerate revolves with increasing energy and another cycle of world evolution begins, as it throws off satellites which repeat the ageless processes which have made our system as we know it today. The tireless forces of nature resume their creative work, and matter or mind, with limitless industry starts afresh the endless dance of phenomena. And so imagination tries to trace, in cycle after cycle, the chain of absorptions and evolutions in a cosmic drama incessantly repetitive and infinitely continuous. Its sublime invariability freezes the heart, and leaves the mind abjectly helpless:

> Where Time and weary Space
> Fettered from flight, with night-mare sense of fleeing
> Strive for their last crepuscular half-being—
> Blank Space, and scytheless Time with brawny hands
> Barren and soundless as the measuring sands.
> Not mar'd by flit of shades—unmeaning they
> As moonlight on the dial of the day!

We have so far been regarding the God-Creator and the man-inventor as analogous, in so far as they need to explain their respective masterpieces to appreciative

spirits or receptive minds, and an intellectual necessity would coerce both, under the conditions of inquiry, earnestly and thoughtfully made, to do so. This view estimates solely the mental factors in the relation of the creator or the inventor to his work, and the imperious call his own understanding of his device incessantly makes for sympathy in coordinated minds. This so far is perfectly well illustrated in human affairs, when we find associations of all kinds organized for the very purpose of affording congenial opportunities for men to advertise and explain their discoveries or inventions.

We now leave the human inventor, and turn to the higher task of postulating compassion or kindliness in the God-Creator, who, possibly absolved from the need of intellectual recognition in His work, must, on the generous grounds of interest or commiseration, bend towards our supplication for enlightenment; and this quality we believe shown in the beauty of the world, which—so say the Christian faculties—He created or made.

Nothing is perhaps more evident about this world itself or the retinue of firmamental lights by which it is accompanied than its beauty. Long before we appreciate the deductions of astronomy, our eyes have dwelt with wonder and fascination on the panorama of the skies at night when Night's hemisphere had veiled the horizon round. Peak and mountain side, vale and forested summit, "green field, and glowing rock and glancing streamlet," were observed by us with delight long before the geologist or the topographic engineer, had traced their causes, and fed our curiosity with an

exact delineation of their historic evolution. As we listen to Ruskin in the following paragraph we are not much troubled by scientific interrogations, nor do we exactly care how carefully they may unravel the sequence of physical events, which formed the scene we have thus nobly described;

"The mountain paths stoop to these glens in forky zigzags, leading to some grey and narrow arch, all fringed under its shuddering curve with the ferns that fear the light; a cross of rough-hewn pine, iron-bound to its parapet, standing dark against the lurid fury of the foam. Far up the glen, as we pause beside the cross, the sky is seen through the openings in the pines, thin with excess of light; and in its clear consuming flame of white space, the summits of the rocky mountains are gathered into solemn crowns and circlets, all flushed in that strange, faint silence of possession by the sunshine which has in it so deep a melancholy; full of power, yet as frail as shadows; lifeless, like the walls of a sepulchre, yet beautiful in tender falls of crimson folds, like the veil of some sea spirit, that lives and dies as the foam flashes; fixed on a perpetual throne, stern against all strength, lifted above all sorrow, and yet effaced and melted utterly into the air by that last sunbeam that has crossed to them from between the two golden clouds."

When we look upon

> "Bags of fiery opals, sapphires, amethysts,
> Jacinths, hard topaz, grass green emeralds,
> Beauteous rubies, sparkling diamonds,
> And seld-seen costly stones of so great price,

As one of them, indifferently rated,
And of a carat of this quantity,
May serve in peril of calamity
To ransom great kings from captivity";

we are not likely to esteem them more or less for knowing something about their composition, their crystallography, or their occurrence. In the glory of their glow we find absorption, that turns aside all simply technical knowing about them. And long before the systems of botanists and the terminology of morphologists had made us acquainted with the relations of plants and trees, had not nature with all her armory of green and blossoming things made us captive to her overmastering beauty.

And call the vales, and bid them hither cast
Their bells and flowerets of a thousand hues.
Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use
Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,
On whose fresh lap the swart star sparely looks,
Throw hither all your quaint enamell'd eyes,
That on the green turf suck the honey'd showers,
And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.
Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies,
The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine,
The white pink, and the pansy freaked with jet,
The glowing violet,
The musk-rose, and the well attired woodbine,
With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,
And every flower that sad embroidery wears:
Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,
And daffodillies fill their cups with tears.

Whatever message the world brings to us of its creator, its beauty more instantly engages our atten-

tions, and proving the mainspring of our song, is reflected in our whole life with instantaneous homage.

Perhaps few men have felt the natural beauty of the world more deeply than Ruskin, who has painted in words its mystery, and responded in his heart and spirit to its higher revelations of purpose. Now this philosopher has written (Modern Painters) "and so, though we were to regard the pleasures of sight merely as the highest of sensual pleasures, and though they were of rare occurrence, and when occurring, isolated and imperfect, there would still be a supernatural character about them, owing to their permanence and self-sufficiency, where no other sensual pleasures are permanent or self-sufficient. But when, instead of being scattered, interrupted, or chance distributed, they are gathered together, and so arranged to enhance each other as by chance they could not be, there is caused by them not only a feeling of strong affection towards the object in which they exist, but a perception of purpose and adaptation of it to our desires; a perception, therefore, of the immediate operation of the Intelligence which so formed us, and so feeds us.

"Out of which perception arise *joy*, *admiration*, and *gratitude*." All of which if fully accepted confesses at once to the merciful regard for his creatures of the Creator. But we beg to be more circumstantial, understanding how serenely with an uncompromising and profoundly poetic depth of faith Ruskin made God real, in the world in which he (Ruskin) moved with such high-minded and illuminating piety.

That the earth and the universe are beautiful; the latter in a remote and mind stirring way only, is unquestioned; but we are engaged in no purely didactic assumptions; does this beauty allow us to believe or assert the compassionate nature of its maker? And again we recur to analogy. What are the temperaments of the makers of beauty in this world? And just here it must be remembered that we only have in mind that sort of beauty which we see in the world, that beauty which if it has been especially prepared for us by an Intelligence, should as Ruskin says awaken "joy, admiration, gratitude." This beauty of the natural world no man more potently, more eloquently recognized than this same Ruskin, who with reverent feet, but with all-seeing eye, has walked upon the earth as one wearing the mantle of inspiration. He has pointed out for us the beauty of Infinity, which he associates with calm and luminous distance, whose pleasure is "the most singular and memorable of which we can be conscious, whether all that is dazzling in color, perfect in form, gladdening in expression, be not of evanescent and shallow appealing, when compared with the still small voice of the level twilight behind purple hills, or the scarlet arch of dawn over the dark, troublous-edged sea." Then follows the beauty of Unity, where, with individual detail, the massiveness of effect follows the presentation of common form, motion, substance, for "it is the working and walking and clinging together that gives their power to the winds, and its syllables and soundings to the air, and weight to the waves, and their burning to the sunbeams, and their

stability to the mountains, and to every creature whatsoever operation is for its glory and for others' good."

Then we are shown the beauty of Repose, which is either "a simple appearance of permanence and quietness, as in the massy forms of a mountain or a rock, accompanied by the lulling effect of all mere mighty sight and sound, which all feel and none define; or else it is repose proper, the rest of things in which there is vitality or capability of motion actual or imagined"; then come Symmetry and Purity and Moderation, in which latter he speaks with charming feeling of "such gray green as that into which nature modifies her distant tints, or such pale green and uncertain as we see in sunset sky, and in the clefts of the glacier and the chrysoprase, and the sea foam; and so of all colors, not that they may not sometimes be deep and full, but that there is a solemn moderation even in their very fullness, and a holy reference beyond and out of their own nature to great harmonies by which they are governed, and in obedience to which is their glory." These six heads constitute what he calls Typical Beauty and then he enters upon the analysis of Vital Beauty as first Relative, and second Generic, and thirdly In Man. The Relative is found in the fitting action and cooperation of all life on the earth, wherein "there is now uttered for us a call for sympathy, now offered to us an image of moral purpose and achievement, which however unconscious or senseless the creature may indeed be that so seems to call, cannot be heard without affection, nor contemplated without worship, by any of us

whose heart is rightly tuned, or whose mind is clearly and surely sighted."

Of the Generic, which might be understood as the Ideal, he says "therefore the task of the painter in his pursuit of ideal form is to attain accurate knowledge, so far as may be in his power, of the character, habits, and peculiar virtues and duties of every specie of being; down even to the stone, for there is an ideality of stones according to their kind, an ideality of granite and slate and marble, and it is in the utmost and most exalted exhibition of such individual character, order and use, that all ideality of art consists. The more cautious he is in assigning the right species of moss to its favorite trunk, and the right kind of weed to its necessary stone, in marking the definite and characteristic leaf, blossom, seed, fracture, color, and inward anatomy of every thing, the more truly ideal his work becomes." In Man beauty seems to have suffered much natural defacement, suggesting that *Fall* which—in deference to Christian teachings—we have continuously mentioned. Thus Ruskin writes "But behold now a sudden change from all former experience. No longer among the individuals of the race is there equality or likeness, a distributed fairness and fixed type visible in each, but evil diversity, and terrible stamp of various degradation; features seamed with sickness, dimmed by sensuality, convulsed by passion, pinched by poverty, shadowed by sorrow, branded with remorse; bodies consumed by sloth, broken down by labor, tortured by disease, dishonored in foul uses; intellects without power, hearts without hope, minds earthly and devilish;

our bones full of the sins of our youth, the heaven revealing our iniquity, the earth rising up against us, the roots dried up beneath, and the branch cut off above; well for us only, if, after beholding this our natural face in a glass, we desire not straightway to forget what manner of men we be."

The upshot of all this is clear. There is beauty in the world of the highest order and almost—excepting the sad exception of man himself—universal, covering the earth and dwelling in the sky with an almost insufferable intensity, omnipresent and insistent, and yet too, mysteriously eluding vulgar search, but revealed to poets in many subtleties of tenderness, and veiled sacraments of glory, and with all wonderfully springing from that law and order, by relevant and inerrant rules, by which formerly we got the impression of a machine, though, as so keenly observed by Ruskin, "it is to be noted that whenever we dissect the animal frame, or conceive it as dissected, and substitute in our ideas the neatness of mechanical contrivance for the pleasures of the animal; the moment we reduce enjoyment to ingenuity and volition to leverage, that instant all sense of beauty disappears."

Now where among men shall we find the analogy of the same sort of giver of beauty? From whose qualities may we argue God's? They are most evidently the poets and the painters or artists, who return to us the beauty of the world, as they, with deep seeing eyes and gifted expression obtain it. These vary enormously in their power, but with those who sincerely and with loving hearts and steadfast mien contemplate nature

and Man, they do in reality come between us and God as expositors of his gifts. Now if we regard these persons and take them throughout their wide and multiformly diversified traits, we are invariably permitted to learn that they are merciful, generous to need, sympathetic, full of loving insight, quick to heed appeals, with a sort of resolute willingness to help, and not infrequently heated into a kind of madness to set things straight, as they understand straightness.

Such men were Shelley, Keats, Byron, Goldsmith, Whittier, Burns, Chaucer as amongst the more transparently genial to the calls of compassion. But it is unnecessary to even hint at names. The doing with the beauty of the world, which, in the sense of Ruskin's Theoretic Faculty has had no profound development before the Christian thought and temperament arose, with its varied response to the *shadowyness* of the earth, and indeed has reached only the more copious expressions in modern times; this doing with beauty can have but a foregone conclusion. It softens the heart, it leads away from conventional harshnesses, and pours lustres of merciful contemplation over the soul.

It thus becomes apparent that we have every reason to think that God as an intellectual obligation to Himself would tell us—if we asked—what this machine of the world is, and whether He made it and whether we, as parts of it, have a destiny apart from it, and, as the giver of its beauty, would be most mercifully inclined to appreciate and condescend to our urgency and tearful supplications. All this seems so indubitable that we might say that the Christian hypothesis—by the

countenance of whose assumptions it is made—would stand or fall by the favorable or unfavorable outcome of the experiment. What form shall the experiment take, how shall we find out whether we confront a silent or a speaking God, how assault with importunity that tremendous and almost inconceivable power that has originated this so stupendous fabric, this interminable mechanism, this tabernacle and fane of beauty?

CHAPTER IV

The Plan

On the Christian plan of action, in such a case, its deeply imbedded practice comes forcibly and with an invincible appositeness to mind. *We should pray.* We have constructed all our approaches to this plan upon Christian statement. We logically accept its alternative. Let the Plan be prayer. The matter deserves a little enlargement.

It might at first appear to the larger number of today well read and worldly thinking men and women, that prayer has no conceivable efficacy in rearranging or intercepting the natural and regular course of nature; and that its intervention in the affairs of the physical world is a foolish delusion. They feel at a loss to understand how there could be averted sunstroke, lightning shock, earthquake, destruction, deluge, drought, pestilence, accident, so far as these depended upon the necessary antecedents in the realm of natural law to accomplish them or prevent them. They would agree with Lord Palmerston that the prayer that abolishes cholera or typhoid fever is cleanliness and sanitation. On the other hand in matters of the spirit or mind they would—perhaps in a faltering way—concede that prayer has an estimable weight, but even then subjectively, by moulding the feelings to the phases of emotion expressed in the prayer. If a man prayed for the

removal of a disagreeable attitude of temper he might gain relief from the very intensity of his subjective contemplation of his desire; but if he asked for guidance in the proper course of conduct, as in a battle or in affairs of state, they might question its applicability, and thus reassert, as in the previous instances, their rooted scepticism of the interference, condescension, and actual agency of a supernatural power, whose skill as an omniscient being would, if available, secure absolutely a certain result.

This diffidence about the use of prayer is very sincere, and it is very natural; it seems involved in the texture of modern thinking, not belligerently or scoffingly, but irredeemably placed there by education and environment. Now it is to be observed that in the case under consideration there is no question raised as to the conduct of either nature or man; there is no calling for any change in the fixed disposition of the elements in one or the other. The suggestion is to frame on the largest scale imaginable a very vast and a very earnest question, pervading it however with that interior posture of reverence which among believing Christians is inseparable from the conception of prayer.

Why is it not possible for any earnest and thoughtful man or woman to engage in this undertaking, which should be spontaneously willing, consentaneous, and of universal scope? Let it be observed that this Plan is not promoted in any spirit of fantastic curiosity or insidious and winking satire; it seems to us a serious and virtual proposition, that a wide and searching request, a petition directed as well as human experience

can show, towards the accepted Author of this universe, and this earth, in which according to the doctrines of those revelations, which form for a large part of the race, a veritable testimony of His imminent relation to the whole human family, He has been vitally concerned, and wherein a scheme instituted by Him known as the Scheme of Salvation is now actually in process of enactment, that such a petition incorporating, in some fashion all thoughtful men and women might receive a recognizable answer.

What might be called the Eugenics of Prayer has not been, as far as we know, clearly outlined; the success of prayer "does not come with observation," and the wandering ministrations of the Spirit permit no hard and fast rule, or even any observed schedule of practice for its prosperity. Is it in numbers, in the excellence of the supplicant, the reasonableness and amiability of the supplication, the fierce concentration of desire, or in some other feature recondite and mysterious, cannot be certainly known, except that broadly, the spirit of prayer should be preserved, which undoubtedly means a self-abandonment in the motive of the prayer, and an absolute confidence that it is heard. Of course individual power has been proven important in the lives of the saints, though the matter, so far as historical records go, appears more luminously in the lives of the Catholic worthies.

St. Francis of Assisi who initiated a movement which had, according to his biographer (W. J. Knox Little), "a striking resemblance in many points to the first age of the Church," rejoiced apparently in the more

marvellous efficiencies of prayer, catching, so the legends or facts in the case state, glimpses of immaterial things, and painted visions of beauty. Little says at his time, "there was much cruelty and oppression, the poor were in almost hopeless misery; the rich wrapped in worldliness, selfishness and luxury. Religion had become to a great extent merely nominal. The church was failing in her mission, deeply corrupt, and terribly inefficient; words had taken the place of things." St. Francis and his followers as Dean Church explains, became a peculiar people, and their efforts at reform "meant that, for that service, they had absolutely separated themselves from the common aims of human life, the ordinary pursuits, the usual course and stream of activity all round them. They had to work apart from all this, and for this service alone they lived."

It might be well expected that prayer, if there is truth in the affinity of goodness with the superintendence and the observation of a ruling Providence, would secure some substantial and positive tokens of its acceptance in the case of a man bearing upon himself (the fact of the "stigmata" is subscribed to by Little, but has received a physiological elucidation) the miraculous marks of a hypostatic martyrdom. The unfailing perfection of conduct united with an extreme and indefatigable ardor for benevolence, and that delirious satisfaction in bodily humiliations and indignities and deprivations, which so delight the Roman zealots, distinguished Saint Francis of Assisi, though there was not wanting as might be apprehended from his practical success, sound sense and wise deliberation in his plans.

Again if we turn to the annals of Saint Francis Xavier we are plunged at once, in the not perhaps over veracious history of Father Dominick Bohours, into a scene of various astonishment, where we follow the intrepid and restless wanderings of a veritable knight-missioner.

Saint Francis Xavier thirsted for spiritual conquest, and under the influence of martial impressions and duties would have made an indomitable fighter. He rushed impetuously throughout the East, over running India, the Moluccas, Amboyna, Japan, Malacca, thirsting for adventure, tumultuously mixing up prayers and devotion, sermons and harangues, struggles and repulses, attacks and rescues, in the most picturesque confusion. He was indeed denominated "the man of prodigies, the friend of heaven, the master of nature, and the god of the world." His prayers possessed surpassing power and he seemed especially endowed with magical domination, raising the dead, prophesying while his ironic indifference and open scorn of demons, caused these agile imps to assault "him in great numbers, and beat him so violently that he was all over bruised, and forced to keep his bed for some days together."

As with Ignatius Loyala, his ecstatic moods in prayer had the appearance of a reversion of natural laws. His transported biographer tell us that "some have affirmed that at first they have found him on his knees immovable, how by degrees he was mounted from the earth: and that then being seized with a sacred horror, they could not steadfastly behold him so bright and radiant was his countenance. Others have protested, that

while he was speaking to them of the things of God, they could perceive him shooting upward, and distancing himself from them on a sudden, and his body raising itself on high of its own motion." His prayers imbued him with a ferocity of daring, and in his encounter with the wild Badages he rushed upon them with a few followers and fairly took their breath away by his impetuosity, for his words "cast a terror into the minds of these soldiers, who were at the head of the army; they remained confounded, and without motion. They, who marched after them, seeing the foremost advanced not, asked the reason of it; answer was returned from the first ranks, that they had before their eyes an unknown person habited in black, of a more than human stature, of a terrible aspect, and darting fire from his eyes. The most hardy were desirous to satisfy themselves concerning what was told them, they were seized with amazement at the sight, and all of them fled with precipitate confusion."

If we consider the story of Saint Anthony as narrated by Athanasius and displayed by Newman we find renewed emphasis of the power of prayer, though in his case, as applied to the sick, it often failed; "when heard he did not boast; when unsuccessful, he did not murmur; but under all circumstances, he gave thanks himself to the Lord, and exhorted the sufferers to be patient, and to be assured that their cure was out of the power of himself, and indeed of any man, and lay with God only, who wrought when He would, and towards whom He chose."

The miraculous effects of prayer (and in the Plan now

to be promoted the miraculous is essentially present), are seen in the published records of the lives of the various saints, with some diversity, but in the main with one purport, for as Cardinal Newman has said "it would be very easy to mistake a chapter in the life of one holy missionary or nun for a chapter in the life of another." There are the miracles of the dwellers in the wilderness—the Solitaries—and those of Saint Martin, Saint Anthony, Saint Gregory Thaumaturgus, Saint Hubert, Saint Teresa and so many others that it would be folly and fatigue to try their numbers. The point is here to be made, that if, as a historical fact, prayer has a supernatural efficacy, what are the indispensable accompaniments of it in that respect?

In the lives of the saints the interposition of a divine agency to avert disaster, to cure the sick, to raise the dead, with portents and visions and manifestations of direful or momentous interest are dwelt on, but are not precisely what we are now in search of. Did prayer also secure illumination? Were the minds of the prayerful taught? Were ideas imparted, and direct knowledge vouchsafed? It would doubtless seem so, to a Catholic, as he reads of the incessant fighting for the preservation of a correct creed, and the involution of the leaders of the Church in this conflict; how Basil and Gregory extirpated Arianism in the East; how Saint Augustine of Hippo routed heresy and schism in Africa; how Cyril disciplined Nestorius, and how the innumerable gnostic sects were confronted, denied, and overthrown.

In all this clamor of debate, argument, intrigue, shuffling of views, and iteration of dogma, fencing of

dialetics, palsy of judgment, and flattering compromise, to a Catholic, the true way was kept by the Fathers of the Church through guidance gained by prayer. It would appear to them at least as impossible to conceive that the deposits of the faith were kept unadulterated, except their guardians had maintained an interior fixity of mind conferred upon them by prayer.

So it would, in the light of this evidence appear to Catholics that prayer does illuminate; does furnish knowledge as well as issue in a profusion of miraculous phenomena. But it would be wholly inadmissible to limit an inquiry, as to the possible usefulness of prayer in the Plan here projected, to an age and a group of remarkable men, whose asceticism, imperious faith, and habits of incessant religious meditation, are much at variance with our day.

The tyranny of Protestant prejudices directs us to look for the influence of prayer in less remote, less mystical ages, in times when a more soothing sense of the vitality, value, and harmlessness of material joys prevails, when, as Gail Hamilton put in long ago, people believe that "religion organizes and symmetrizes life, but cramps nothing, annihilates nothing." But before doing so a moment's attention to the characteristics of the workers in prayer, we have mentioned, is helpful, for an estimate of the properties to be sought in our hypothetical experiment in the same direction. These men shown us by the early Church refined away their bodily qualities by the most aggravated mortification, while by religious devotions, and unappeasable compassion for suffering, and reckless unpremeditating self-

sacrifice, they attained a sublimity of spiritual insight, and may have, as it were, coerced upon themselves the endowment of supernatural virtues, so that they held a membership, and wielded a sovereignty in divine economies.

Now it is almost ludicrously certain that the propulsion of the Plan cannot receive help from this class of persons as they do not evidently exist today. Nor would their agency we suppose be exactly calculated to assist it. Saints of the type we have been rehearsing, move in individualized circles of influence, and might be said, in the past to have met doctrinal exigencies, or the special calls of localized calamities. Their influence in the feasibility of a large racial prayer might not be more important than the reader's or the author's. Still, as we shall learn later on, the lessons of their conduct will be most useful in the way of suggestion.

When we reach Protestant examples of spiritual power or, as might be said, protagonists of prayer, we encounter a more moderate dispensation of regimen, and one which, divested of the too unctuous surrender to self depreciation, assumes in our eyes a more refined, a statelier, and simpler fervency. Men engaged in serious matters of secular change, the liberation of people, the protection of liberty, the repulse of tyranny and corruption, have found reinforcement of their resolves and enlightenment of their minds in prayer. At least it seems so, and they appeal to our modern sense with a more congruous force than the weeping self-accusations of early Christian saints, though we must deeply reverence the firmness of conviction that

brought immolation to these latter, for conscience sake, and the security of Truth. These later examples of prayerful men do not so exceptionally illustrate the power of prayer or establish its reality. No miracles, no vision, none of the apparatus of supernature, attested its actual force. But in the view of those who used it, in critical occasions, its validity was established. Let us see.

In the characters and works of William of Orange, George Washington, and Oliver Cromwell, we are brought in contact with that disposition of faculties and ideals, which have been most useful in the establishment of enduring and self preservative institutions, in the growth of those sentiments which are the most sensibly helpful to human society, and in the perpetuation of the solidest standards of human conduct. They were men who fought disinterestedly for the maintenance, for the principles, of individualism, the self-propagating vigor of independent thought, and the fruitful liberties of untrammelled choice. They were bred in homes of regulated supervision, and learned in early years the enforced lessons of sobriety and self-command; their natures by the fortunate concurrence of heredity and education developed along the lines of earnestness and responsibility, and history conducted them into the fields of action, where the fates of nations hang in the balance, and the destinies of men wait on the issues of battles and debates. Sobered by their own emergence among the leaders of the centuries, and never forgetful of impressions that matured with their growing years, they have not hesitated to look for sup-

port, or at any rate to ask for it, from Sources mysterious and superhuman.

As regards William of Orange we are told by Motley that his mother—Juliana of Stolberg—"was a person of most exemplary character and unaffected piety. She instilled into the minds of all her children the elements of that devotional sentiment which was her own striking characteristic, and it was destined that the seed sown early should increase to an abundant harvest. Nothing can be more tender or more touching than the letters which still exist from her hand, written to her illustrious sons in hours of anxiety or anguish, and to the last, recommending to them with as much earnest simplicity as if they were still little children at her knee, to rely alway, in the midst of the trials and dangers which were to beset their paths through life, upon the great hand of God." In a man sedate, restrained, serious in observation, and constrained by judgment, such a training formed irrevocably, the texture of his moral fibre. It lasted him through life, and it revealed itself in habits of prayer.

As to Washington, Irving traces in him also the permanent effects of a mother's fostering care, the indelible imprints of early discipline. He says; "tradition gives an interesting picture of the widow, with her little flock gathered round her, as was her daily wont, reading to them lessons of religion and morality out of some standard work. Her favorite volume was Sir Matthew Hale's Contemplations, moral and divine. The admirable maxims therein contained for outward action as well as self-government, sank deep into the

mind of George, and, doubtless had a great influence in forming his character. They certainly were exemplified in his conduct throughout life. This mother's manual, bearing his mother's name, Mary Washington, written with her own hand, was ever preserved by him with filial care, and may still be seen in the archives of Mount Vernon. A precious document! Let those who wish to know the moral foundation of his character consult its pages." That Washington used prayer in the trials and arduous predicaments of his life, at the moments when its actual satisfaction by response was necessary, is well known, or at least popularly believed.*

As to Cromwell, Carlyle says of his time "a practical world based on Belief in God—such as many centuries had seen before, but as never any century since has been privileged to see. It was the last glimpse of it in our world, this of English Puritanism very great, very glorious; tragical enough to all thinking hearts that look on it from these days of ours." It would be in Cromwell's case superfluous to argue as to his reliance on God, a very self-evident fact; this extract from a letter written at the Battle of Worcester is pertinent, "the Lord God Almighty frame our hearts to real thankfulness for this, which is alone His doing"; and again at Dunbar he writes, "but the only wise God knows what is best. All shall wait for God. Our

*John M. Robertson has adduced some evidence to the effect that Washington was a merely formal Christian. Wellington's biographer relates the strictures made upon the Iron Duke's absence from church service, which I think Wellington excused on the grounds of his imperfect hearing—certainly a ludicrous extenuation. We might infer from Robertson, a similar luke-warm though respectful bearing towards Christian doctrine on the part of Washington.

spirits are comfortable, praise be the Lord—though our present condition be as it is. And indeed we had much hope in the Lord: of whose mercy we have had large experience." All of Cromwell's letters, as given by Carlyle, are filled from edge to edge with symptomatic prayerfulness and piety.

If these men—instruments in some of the most momentous occurrences of modern times—used prayer, was it of any more assistance to them than a salutary moral and subjectively strengthening practice? It certainly cannot be proven that it was. There was raised for them after intercessions of this sort no *in hoc signo vinci*, there were uttered no signals of condescension, no voices were heard, no ministering seraphs came, nor did celestial warriors fight in their midst in warfare, or white robed councillors open the heavens of admonition and warning and direction. Would the Rise of the Dutch Republic have been the same historical event without the intervention of the Prince of Nassau's prayers, the American Revolution as positive a result without the piety of Washington, or the overthrow of royalism as circumstantial and final without the self consecration of Cromwell? Who can say? The settlement of just such a query enters into the practical consequences of the Plan here to be outlined. Yet with whatever misgivings we retire from the contemplation of these alternatives, it is absolutely assured that generations of men have assigned a real efficacy to the prayers of these distinguished and successful actors in the campaign of human rights and the march of civil deliverance.

If we look about for examples of the use of prayer on some great public or national scale by some unanimous and concerted operation of sympathy, we might advert to the recent national assemblage of the people on the occasion of the assassination of President Garfield. In the summer of 1881, the President was shot at the railway station in Washington, by a demented and depraved culprit, inflamed with conceited delusions, scurrilous from envy, and strangely degenerate in language and perception.

The President was threatened with blood poisoning (Septicaemia), and the bullet, at first thought to be imbedded in his liver, defied extraction. Surgery and medicine hastened to his bedside, and the whole country with an inevitable sympathy and apprehension waited anxiously for the issue. Finally there was a religious demonstration. The people of the nation were summoned to their churches, and synagogues, and a vast imploration instituted.

It was earnestly made; it represented a real and unaffected appeal; it was not marred by ribaldry or scorn; many may have looked with wonder and utter incredulity at this remarkable intervention, but they certainly remained quiet and attentive, and not unwilling, from the depth of their own sorrow and regret, to welcome its propitious effects. But the President died. And the sardonic commentary, written by events, was, that the doctors had missed the location of the fatal bullet, and had the discovery of later years—viz. the Rontgen rays—been then at their command, the hidden missile would have been revealed, and the President

should have recovered. Apparently then knowledge, merely a little more science, would have kept the President alive—while, to the confusion of faith, the prayers of the Nation availed nothing.

There is however one circumstance which might be dwelt on. After the day of prayer there was a noticeable improvement. It might be tentatively urged that had the prayers continued, had they been pushed with homogeneous energy some time longer, they might have brought relief. Yet although the ceremonial conspicuousness of a nation's humility lasted but a day, in no household in the United States, where the custom of prayer obtains, was the President's extremity forgotten. Is public prayer and the communal utterance of numbers more effective than even one honest supplication, from a grieving heart? Again it might be noticed that thousands made no sign, could make none, because they thought the expedient futile and superstitious. This national effort, approximating in character to the Plan we are about to describe would, with many, replace the Plan itself and prove that either there was no God, or that He was silent, indolent or indifferent. But this is sophistry. To the plans of Omniscience the President's death was or might have been a necessity, with reference to something, dependent upon it, for its realization. And—though it is a puerile suggestion—this occurrence might be prejudged as the healing of a dangerous rupture in a national party, or the rebuke of the spirit of Contumacy and Spoils.

It might be safely affirmed that among the incentives to prayer that, within the meaning of the word and

determined by personal experience as we find it in the records of those qualified to speak, the pressure of external dangers or solicitudes impart to it the requisite energy, the intense psychic abandonment of interfering thoughts that would give it superior potency. Thus John Knox, in his treatise "A Declaration of the True Nature and Object of Prayer," says "trouble and fear are very spurs to prayer; for when man, compassed about with vehement calamities, and vexed with continual solicitude, having by help of man no hope of deliverance, with sore oppressed and punished heart, fearing also greater punishment to follow from the deep pit of tribulation, doth call to God for comfort, and help, such prayer ascendeth to God's presence and returneth not in vain." If the prayer contemplated in our Plan is to attain a veritable excellence, this kind of urgency should enter into it, though we fear it cannot, as the Plan—like this essay—is conceived in a partial spirit of skeptical remonstrance. However we shall expound that part of it later.

John Wesley, as an exponent of religious fervor, a fearless and tireless adventurer for the bestowal of religious mercies, asserted—as was inevitable—the virtue of prayer. But perhaps this remarkable man, bold, distinct, and renovating, does not deserve too much credence, for he was over credulous in supernatural things, finding no difficulty in accepting witchcraft, apparitions, demoniacal possessions, portents, and dreams, and was as much impressed as any one in the commonplace stories of unearthly visitations.

The famous apparition of the Cock Lane ghost,

afterwards demonstrated to have been an imposture, involving the skillful accomplishments of a ventriloquist, and the auxiliary intervention of a Mr. and Mrs. William Parsons, would have been accepted by Wesley unhesitatingly. This certification to the invasion of the world of every day occurrences by something different and unaccountable seems natural in a man encountering at his revivals such nervous dislocations, as are described in his Diary, where "seizures," convulsions, when men had "great drops of sweat run down their faces and all their bones shook," occurred, when disasters were apparently averted through prayer, and sickness was cured by Faith;—the latter a beneficial alternative, as might be understood, at a time, when medicine was a wretched mixture of blood letting and drastic purges, a feeble and blind art well calculated to destroy mind and body. Here however we meet in Wesley again, the mental concentration and faith, the unreserved surrender to the subjective impressions of the mind, when, as Professor Frank Granger has written of "Voices and Visions"; "they are not always projected upon the outer world, but seem rather to be ideas vividly presented to the mind in a visible and audible form."

We have only glanced at the long list of instances of the successful employment of prayer. Naturally, in the chronicles of the religious, these become interminably multiplied, and the readiness to assign every favoring chance in life, each return to health and the propitious smile of fortune to the power of prayer, is inevitable with those whose days begin and end with prayer, and whose hours from sunrise to sunset are filled with its almost involuntary support and utterance.

But, however slightingly regarded, however often we may believe the ascent of prayer and the winning of a desired end are accidental coincidences, which appear to the recipients, as having a casual connexion, it is as clear as daylight that through its agency we must expect to formulate the appeal to God to again declare Himself, and to again pronounce upon our relations to this Universe of His, our own terms of existence, and upon the value of the Philosophy of that Theology which makes our behaviour a measure of our reward, and the fact of Immortality an article of its creed. How clear this is! Reflection or Invention can neither suggest any other Plan; and they, gathering together the fruits of experience, the facts of observation, and the council of those to whom Prayer is a discipline, an art, and a system, having, if not an intelligible, an observed Law of Proficiency, must denote that only through such an avenue of approach may the Question be asked or the Answer be expected.

If we look a little more closely at what might be called the Constants of Prayer—the developments of those essentials which administer to it adequacy and certainty, we find them I think, implied in

First, Mental Power or Concentration;

Second, Mental Confidence or Cheerfulness, "faith";

Third, Mental Persistence or Iteration;

and along with these a group of corporeal conditions, states of the body, which function in a tributary and helpful way to make the Mental Power stronger, the Mental Confidence deeper, and the Mental Persistence more unswerving. It is most plain that the prayer to

be used in the Plan is petitional Prayer; it is not that reverential and emotional exercise which has been thus alluded to by Saint Teresa, "the soul which begins to walk in the way of mental prayer with resolution, and is determined not to care much, neither to rejoice nor to be greatly afflicted, whether sweetness and tenderness fail it, or our Lord grants them, has already traveled a great part of the road"; it would not be exactly I think, as Professor Granger says, "the expression of the love of the soul towards its invisible companion—a love which does not consist in tears, nor in this sweetness and tenderness which we for the most part desire, and with which we console ourselves, but rather in serving Him in justice, fortitude, and humility," though such states and attitudes might form the sub-conscious ground from which the prayer started.

The prayer itself would be conceived in a spirit of intellectual hunger. It would be the monstrous and absolute summons for Revelation. There would be for it no equivalent in a purely receptive state. To give it the highest psychological force, its reasonableness—perhaps its necessity—must be acutely realized. And this, just with those whose praying powers would be most needed, might be resented. The need of a new Declaration from God should be felt as keenly as those "troubles and fears," which John Knox alluded to as the "very spurs to prayer." Here might arise a real difficulty. The religious, the orthodox, the believers, the faithful, the army of Christians might not understand this need, nor care for it though why they should

not, is hard to see. But again its realization among another large and unconnected group, might as suddenly augment the praying company by a very utilizable mass of mental force. These would be however novices and untrained in devotional processes.

Answer to prayer on a scale of magnificence, of portentous or beautiful happenings, in any such degree as entitles it to be called a Revelation cannot be carelessly expected. However constantly and quietly the revenue of prayer and insight, through prayer, accumulates, to the Christian, it will be granted by its beneficiary, that it is attended with no phenomena of wonders. But our Plan, it seems to us, must contemplate a manifestation from God, if it comes at all, and the answer is convincingly affirmative and instructive, of extraordinary physical volume. Consider our project, how grandiose and stupendous it is. We would, as it were, summon the populations of the world to raise a universal cry for God's Appearance, somehow, with reassuring certainty. And imagine the consequences. A world blazing with a new fire of conviction, for an instant at least fused into a solidarity of action, of expectation, of acceptance, that would melt the barriers of nations, the boundaries of creeds, and fertilize with an exuberance, past description or computation, the fields and the flowers of benevolence, while the devastating plague of crime and corruption, idiocy, blackguardism, diseased hearts and burnt out passions, would shrink into annihilation before this Unshrouded Assertion, once for all unmistakable and complete.

We may be all wrong; the Plan barren of results; but Why?

CHAPTER V

The Plan (Continued)

The Plan contemplates at first a missionary campaign for the illustration and emphasis of its special object; a preliminary excitation of the attention and the feelings of the world, as to the value of such an effort. These missionary preachments might extend over an entire year accompanied by the wide circulation of tracts for the same purpose. They would involve a rational discussion of our needs in the matter with exhortations and advice, as to the seriousness and the strange possibilities of the movement. Discussion should be prohibited, so far at least, as to bring rancor or discord among its participants. It must assume, it must preserve an expression of august and silent earnestness, its emotional force cannot be wasted in the acridities of debate. Let the question be fairly put whether the world is not today anxious to know more about the things which concern the critical question of religion, and whether there is not dwelling in the hearts of many, a momentous gravity of doubt as to the meaning of our incessant activities before the silence of the grave. The aspect of curious experimentation should be utterly annihilated. It must embody the entire psychic energy of people, being conducted in a spirit of the most solemn self-forgetfulness, suffused, so to speak, with a shuddering wonder and tenderness of

desire, which will bring to the surface the immitigable cravings of our hearts to have light and understanding.

This preliminary phase of the undertaking is important; it means the thorough impregnation of the people's mind with the solemnity and the urgency of the inquiry. The scheme should be most variously divided. Its philosophic aspects, its practical consequences, its religious significance, the very overt bearing it has upon the whole conduct of life, national and personal, the fundamental suggestions it may furnish as to how the answer meets the public problems of society, as well as the new commands it may publish to the individual should be displayed. For such purposes selected men should present it and the presentation should above all things be careful and devout, in the sense that they feel the seriousness of the work and the absolute demand for honesty and sincerity and a certain watchful self-restraint and self effacement.

It is not difficult to previse what such presentations would be. The philosophers struggling with their solutions of the universe, catching stray rays of light here and there, and baffled in their grave and patient way with the practical contradictions of their laced and word spun iterations, would willingly consent to silence, while the consciousness of the race, with bowed heads and abject lips sought for a revealment from the invisible, and they—proud reserved philosophers—stood aside expectantly, even if they did not unite in the Great Prayer. Science, jubilant and undismayed, meeting the witchcraft of the world of nature, with new incantations and a skill of its own, might suddenly confess itself

impotent before the ultimate meaning of the earth, and the universe, and, with the sudden transport of a new convert, throw aside its scorn, calm its provocations to mirth, and kneel too with the supplicant multitude. Politics and statemanship could not fail unhesitatingly to feel the new easement that would supervene in the conduct of the world's affairs if the temper of the peoples—and their own as indivisible and one with it—gained a strange sobriety and elevation, while vastly looming in their eyes they saw the moral outlines of moral communities morally controlled. At no point of human interest could there be dissent, except with those who profit by confusion and disappointment, and despair, and crime, who shrink from a firmer answer and a steadier light in human creeds, since from uncertainty to incertainty in human thought they spin their gossamers of delusion or illusion, and sit in the middles of their crafty webs, wicked and vain, or foolish and futile.

These administrations extending over a year might be conducted in churches, synagogues, public meeting places, in addresses, and in articles until the impetus of the great experiment carried its questions into the households, the warerooms, the counting houses, and passed insensibly, multiformly and intensely, into the current of the daily greeting and occupations, as to be subconsciously present to everyone at all times. The work must cover the earth; in all nations, in all languages, the same process of education, excitation, and appeal, should be conceived and executed, and among the non-Christian peoples their wise and thoughtful

men—in whom of course reside the spirit of contemplation and aspiration—must also be gathered into the army of desire and supplication. The learned Hindoo, the grave Confucian, the poetic Tsaotist, the refined Persian, the reserved Mohammedan, and above all the Jew whose direct correlation with God, we accept as an historic fact could very willingly be incorporated in this movement, for it contemplates an approach to the Creator, divested of all dogmatic functions, or conditions, being the aggregated call of the whole human consciousness to its Author, of whom Prof. James has said "the abysses of the human conscience are naked in His eyes. The ear of God knows the utterances of His soul and the cry of His imagination."

Indeed it would be hard to conceive any more particular bond of sympathy between men of diverse faith, than just this mystery of life, which might yield to a partial brightness, if this Prayer was answered. Formerly a philosophy, a religion, a revelation, satisfied men, and an effort to add to the deposit of faith would have been regarded as an impertinence. This is no longer true. We find ourselves the imprisoned occupants of a little sphere, with unqualified powers of mind, and confronting objective states of matter inexplicable, unexplained, and subjective states of feeling and conception and reasoning, which, when materialized or expanded in history, develop a spectacle crowded with suffering—albeit much joy also—injustice and bereavement. And men are no longer wholly content with the apologies of the devout, or the specifications of the ingenious. How wonderfully the darkness would recede if the Heavens spoke!

The effect of this crusade—the word is unpleasant and offensive—would be certainly impressive; I think the chief difficulty throughout would be the salvation of the emotional dignity of the movement, the prevention of it lapsing into solipsism, cant and condescension. This might be averted by keeping it connected with Christian practice, and using the necessary instruction, in its objects and aims, in the churches, for the very grounds of hope in the matter rest—as we have all along insisted—on the postulates of the Christian faith.

I have not yet mentioned one chief misgiving. It is the view the Christian communities might take of it. Their help is absolutely indispensable, because of their cultivation of deep feeling, and the unquestioned beauty of their spiritual position. Perhaps they feel themselves too well entrenched in certainty, to need further knowledge or would deem it an impertinence to ask for it. They might feel that they would forfeit all their Christian rights if they did so. It would then be essential to meet and overcome these scruples. Practically the church members would be guided by their spiritual pastors and leaders, and it hardly seems possible that these men cognizant of the honest doubt, the wide rejection of the Christian creeds, the failing strength of the churches everywhere—witness the slow but apparently certain dislodgment of the Catholic church in France, Italy, and Spain—the New Criticism, and its adherents, the sharp interrogation from the street and the University of the Christian doctrine, could look with any sentiment other than one of gratitude, at a design which would reinstate fervor and believing. The arguments of the

next chapter are intended to overcome this Christian repugnance if it existed.

Now assuming unanimity of action, the subscription to the plan by the churches and the societies, the thinkers, the writers, the press, rulers of nations, the whole organized mass of intelligence and feeling in the whole world, then the preparation of the critical, the sublime moment follows, when the Prayer is made. At this point I should judge it a safe rule to unite the Prayer with the regular exercises or services of the church or societies. The Prayer should be wisely formed, and not extemporaneous any where. It should be in parts and separated by singing or music, and continued for a long time, with silences interpolated of meditation, or exhortation, or reflections, or readings. The Christian habit of approach to God must be accepted. There is no other. This period of prayer might extend over a year, and the ministrants and the worshippers might exercise, during its duration, those observances of fasting or deprivation which—so far as the facts known to us in the history of prayer reveal it—have been tried with success in the past. And then, when all is done, when the devotional and the mental and the emotional energies of the race have been concentrated in this Prayer, and the last resources of the soul have been exhausted, then succeeds the silence of expectation.

The whole plan of this *Revelatio revelata* finds justification in Christian usage, as its expediency and propriety spring from Christian belief. Saint Augustine addressing God says "Thou findest pleasure in us, and so re-

gardest each of us as though Thou hadst him alone to care for"; it seems inconceivable that on such an assurance God should not satisfy this abundant call for knowledge. And as to any objection to the artificial structure of it; the ready made plans, the scheduled services, the premeditation, and the revised and edited Prayer; this is precisely what is done now in the churches at a festival, or a fast, or any other special moment of remembrance or anniversary. Nothing is more evident. It might indeed be recommended that men sit still, and think, losing themselves in profound reveries of thought and prayer.

They can do so, but that is not ordinarily considered as effective as public service. We are indeed in this Plan taking Christians at their word. If Prayer is not any thing more than a subjective exercise, and its effects are subjective and its utterance a purely provisional device, and church services are ritualistic forms which animate or revivify states of feeling, and have, and can be discussed only as having, no objective ulterior reality in their petitions, then of course the Plan will be a foolish and inoperative one. It should be abandoned, for it would mean a lot of wasted earnestness and a silly prostitution of our faculties. It may be a foolish and inoperative plan, but the Christian has no right to think so, and we insist on his approval.

The Christian prays for a number of direct physical benefits, and must, under the most ordinary suppositions of honesty, mean what he says. It is quite likely, indeed certain, that a large number of church goers who come under the designation of Christians,

probably see little sense in praying for rain, or the safety of their sea going friends, while they approve of such a prayer as that which askes to preserve us "from pride, vainglory and hypocrisy; from envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness."

They admire the generalized petition which asks God "please to succour, help, and comfort all who are in danger, necessity and tribulation" but they might frown ominously if they heard the request that God should cure the typhoid fever of their neighbor's son. But this temporizing and fluctuating attitude is not technically or at all correctly the Christian's. He prays for material things and expects to get them.

The Plan conceives a universal Prayer for the miraculous manifestation of God, or if not, in a sensible way, the miraculous manifestation, some sort of a manifestation, which will dispel the clouds of doubt, and so far set us right on the way of an unimpeachable philosophy if God exists; if as the Christian affirms He is back of all phenomena, and represents the only possible standard of reference which guides men's actions, and has instituted a technical system of salvation, as it is called, then can it be very justly doubted that we have a right to expect Him to look with the deepest compassion upon our wandering vagaries and assailed minds, when what He has said before to us now stands behind the veil of exact science and enlightened understandings, behind also a large amount of rational study, where it seems to the most sincere, a little vague, vacillating, and incomprehensible.

Would any Christian, speaking with transparent

frankness deny our right to ask for light, for certitude, for something better able to establish our convictions than Catechisms of Assent, or Butler Analogies, or even as lovely a plea as Roger's Religious Conceptions of the World? Can we not ask for a new definite revelation with categorical affirmations?

It need not go so far as to make the world a solved and precise problem. With human powers of mind that would be impossible, but we have a need, large and unquenchable, to know the directive Power, the directional forces of the world, which at least will put at rest the querulous combats of theist and atheist, and bring to Faith the usufruct of the world's obedience.

For let the Christian observe *that if there is no God*, if the control is not gathered in the hands of Mind somewhere, then the simple social and moral problems of the earth will receive a startlingly different solution from all that has been exacted from human rulers under the dispensations of Christianity, and we can start on a way of radical regeneration of society, where the elements of mercy will disappear in the over shadowing strides of Justice, and the rule of reason will stultify and demolish the pleas of sympathy or tenderness.

There are two possibilities in the case. There is a God or there is no God; God speaks or He is silent. Christianity carrying the Bible in its hands says there is a God and He speaks. The Plan assumes the truth of the latter statement. But it could be interposed as an objection that God speaks at such times and seasons as in His wisdom and power He thinks is necessary, and that neither prayers or a Plan will coerce Him. Should

the Plan fail to make returns, God's existence remains as unassailable as ever. *Perhaps*, but if the Plan fails to evoke a response, the probabilities of His existence would seem diminished. Let us see.

We might insert still another alternative in the above; God might be merciful and compassionate or He might be simply an intellectual power, indifferent to human needs. The latter supposition is denied by Christianity, and we may insist that the Plan possesses feasibility because on the Christian assumption—a fundamental one also—God is merciful, compassionate, and attentive, and all this because He loves us.

Besides from the beauty of the world we have deducted God's sense of Mercy. That is the Christian position forming the sub-stratum of his whole devotional and emotional life, and embodied in the scheme of Christian salvation. Now as to the likelihood that God would consider the present times as times in which it is unnecessary to speak, or as to the unwisdom of the Plan itself as a foolish enterprise, embodying a spirit of pragmatism and conceit, and hopelessly at variance with the proper attitude of patience and resignation, confidence and humility, which waits for God to choose His own time for any new communication with His people, and indeed expects none until the Day of Judgment.

When Elijah offered to the people of Israel the trial between himself and the priests of Bael as to their respective power through the intervention of their Gods to light the sacrifice on the altar, it was eagerly accepted, and Elijah, after his famous sarcasm of the

fruitless exertions of the priests of Bael to win the attention of their gods, crowned his own earnest invocation with success for "the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it they fell on their faces: and they said, The Lord, He is the God; The Lord, He is the God." And short shrift was given to the priests of the Bael.

This contest between Elijah and the priests of Bael contemplated a distinct predicament. The people of Israel had become honeycombed with pagan and abhorrent practices, and had denied or lost their faith. There was opportunely demanded a proof of the God whose prophet Elijah was, and Elijah gave it, in a manner most suitable to the times and the occasion. The priests of Bael were decidedly side-tracked. I do not know how frankly all Christians accept the story. Today it would be generally looked at with misgivings. But its moral is unmistakable. A critical juncture of disaffection or rejection was met with a tremendous reversal of opinion caused by a thrilling and exhaustive miracle.

Conditions today are similar in phase, even if they differ in quality; today the whole temperamental state of reading and thinking people is skeptical, and where faith exists, in an orthodox sense, it is not too exacting nor too presumptuous; it neither dwells with excessive unction on the passages of Revelation which strain to the breaking point the chain of Christian allegiance, nor does it repudiate with great asperity the New Criticism, or a broad theology; while outside of well ordered

households, which by traditional force or innate dignity maintain a suitable demeanor of judgment and conduct in the affairs of living, there runs riot a seething sea of atheistic scorn, which degenerates into social violence and exorbitant theories.

There are great radical difficulties in life which are often personal, which it is hard to understand, and which cause unrest in those who try very hard to live just and blameless lives, which cause them to question quite unfeelingly the ordinary Christian view of God's relations to man, which some accept with nonchalance, and then live any kind of life they wish to. But it is in their general survey of nature and the world that they are driven to think that no moral or considerate supervision rules it.

The Christian must offer to them more proof; they demand a voice, a message, the rent veil of the temple or the sacrifice licked up by the sheet of descending fire. Huxley states their position broadly when he says; "the vast and varied procession of events which we call Nature, affords a sublime spectacle, and an inexhaustible wealth of attractive problems to the speculative observer. If we confine our attention to that aspect which engages the attention of the intellect, nature appears a beautiful and harmonious whole, the incarnation of a faultless logical process, from certain premises in the past to an inevitable conclusion in the future. But if it be regarded from a less elevated, though more human point of view; if our moral sympathies are allowed to influence our judgment, and we permit ourselves to criticise our great

mother as we criticise one another, then our verdict, at least as far as sentient nature is concerned, can hardly be favorable."

Prof. George Burman Foster in his "Finality of the Christian Religion" has alluded to the suffering path of his experience in religious thought, and expressed his belief, "that a multitude of thoughtful men and women are passing through an experience similar to his own; and that a greater multitude will travel, with bleeding feet, the same *via dolorosa*, tomorrow and the day after." Prof. Foster has indeed vehemently insisted that the "watchword 'Christianity is an historical religion' is superficially true, but fundamentally false" and says further that its "redemptive facts" are not "so very many and not so very certain, neither so many nor so certain as they used to be—whereas it is at bottom a religion of spirit and of personality," which view of course offers a broad and easy way to complete negation, and the most temporizing policy towards all schools of doubt.

Prof. Foster continues "the law of the conservation of energy, together with the nebular hypothesis and Darwinism, seemed to eliminate definitely from the world all mystery, dependence, teleology. If mysteries remained they were simply unsolved but soluble problems of science: the universe was to be completely understood without faith: if there was dependence, it was relative only, the dependence of one part on another part of the self-dependent whole: if there was adaptation, it was not in the purpose, but in the result only: it was fully accounted by natural causes."

In this spirit Laplace said "I have no need of the hypothesis of God." Joachim expected in the year 1260 that Christian symbols would vanish "as to form and abide only as their innermost content" and a new eternal gospel arise, which really forestalled Strauss who in 1871 raised the question, are we still Christians and answered it in the negative. Andrew Lang has intimated that "men had magic before they had religion, and only invented gods because they found that magic did not work. Still later they invented science, which is only magic with a legitimate hypothesis, using real, not fanciful experiences. In the long run magic and religion are to die out, perhaps, and science is to have the whole field to herself."

Kant has written "our age is, in every sense of the word, the age of criticism, and everything must submit to it. Religion on the strength of its sanctity, and law on the strength of its majesty, try to withdraw themselves from it; but by so doing they arouse just suspicions and cannot claim that sincere respect which reason pays to those only who have been able to stand its free and open examination." A good many men would wish to take Christianity at its word, and are disappointed; they feel like the boy who had toothache who asked God to take it away and as there was no relief he gave up his belief; no relief, no religion.

Take this same book of Prof. Foster's which we have alluded to, "The Finality of the Christian Religion": it struggles and struggles, it defines and defines, it rehearses the history of events and imbues them with the meaning which its author preconceives they imply—

after the usual fashion of philosophers who reintegrate the motions of events into formulas of plausible lucidity; it is written with learning, with thought, with wide fertility of resource in language but it proves nothing.

The whole argument must be based on what is already given, and it is simply one man's way of looking at things already known. There are no new facts, no fresh communications, no new living voices; it eliminates and eliminates, and leaves a residue of feeling, and that feeling still relying on a long past revelation or record. The feeling is charming and enticing enough, but feeling does not controvert or make plain the issue of events nor read God into a current of facts that seem godless.

Were we to take up a discussion of crystallography we should at once enter upon a field of observation and experiment, and review a long list of ascertained facts, which would be new in many instances or at least irrefragably true. If we read a treatise on geology we know before we have turned a page that the certainties of science are to be spread out before us, and we follow with undeviating and instructed attention the discussion and demonstration of recognizable facts.

A work of history, of literary criticism may be written in a vein of apology, defence, or accusation, it may be wrong in tone, deceitful in deduction; it may reflect the author's prejudice and place in unequal and positively false lights personages and events, and it may inculcate a philosophy of feeling, or elaborate a doctrine illegitimate or fanciful, but the events, the personages at any rate are real, their relations, their succession, the scenes they enact, the consequences they precipitate, are

undeniable, and no matter in what mist of misconception we are invited to examine them, they are really there.

It is not so long ago that Mr. Frazer in his remarkable book "The Golden Bough," undertook to prove that the Christ of the Christian faith was the representative of a peculiar ceremony obtaining among the Babylonians and their Persian conquerors at a feast in springtime. A condemned criminal was dressed in royal robes, enthroned, and at the end of five days whipped and hung. He was a proxy for the King—himself a divine incarnation—who thus vicariously disposed of—under some warrant for the necessity of renewing the king every year—was again allowed to reign for another year. This festival of Babylon was called the Sacaea. The Jews in captivity had become familiar with it and imported it into Jerusalem and it became the Purim and they borrowed the custom of whipping and hanging a mock king, a criminal in March.

Very recently Kalthoff affirms that Christ was an ideal of a group of aspiring thinkers to whom the poor became embodied "in a plastic form, in a typical ideal picture." The current of religious opinion swings from bank to bank, from agnosticism to theism and back again, but it is directed by internal influences of feeling only, and the banks themselves are less and less filled with opponents who disagree as in a matter of life and death, and are more and more filled with those who differ as a matter of culture.

Mr. Balfour impeaches materialism, determinism, and thrusts upon it deserved retribution for its arro-

gance and the convinced style of its utterance, but he cannot, for all that, furnish us with any other surety. Indeed for that matter Science might equally with religion welcome God's declaration of Himself in an unmistakable way according to the categories of sense and place itself unremittingly at his commands to record and perpetuate the Revelation.

Plain people are as much bothered by the contradictions which the world of events gives to the doctrine of the loving imminence of God as the theologians are in their shifting soliloquies, perambulations, and rationalizing elucidations. Prof. Foster's "the assent of ourselves—not to external authority, however good, but to ourselves—this is the beginning of certainty in whatever region of life" is of no value, not the slightest, for in the question of God or no God, Immortality or No Immortality, Dogma or No Dogma, nothing will meet the requirements of the case but the PROOF, and such phrases as Prof. Foster's serve no other purpose than to loosen the strings of the imagination, and accord to every man according to convenience and temperament the opportunity to create a certainty deduced from his own experience, and limited by the restrictions of his own mind.

And so far as the history of things offers grounds for a conclusion, his certainty will be confessed doubting, misgivings, or denial. Only within a short time the poet Gerald Massey has abetted the growing literary efforts, designed to obliterate a unique source for Christian ethics, in his studies upon the "Sayings of Jesus shown to be Egyptian." Decline on all sides

from a belief in the divinity of Christ to an absorption of his personality simply, to an interior resuscitation of his ideals, to a spirit of cosmopolitanized humanitarianism, which reflects him, marks the era of religious feeling we live in. And with this disintegration of belief among believers follows a stupendous growth of skepticism in all directions, with its concomitant effects of a denial of God, and the substitution of a mechanico-mental device in His place, and an utter abrogation of the hope of immortality.

The Catholic fraternities of the Roman and English churches keep alive, more especially, old formulas and the honorable traditions of worship, and they seem to increase, though it is not a real enlargement; they grow from the retreat of those still anxious for positivism in religion, who find a refuge in the wainscotted, illuminated, windowed, and altar aestheticism of an ancient poetic service, hallowed by time, by eloquence and by taste, and still raising aloft the standard of an impeccable guidance.

Yet it is not a wicked age. It is an age of immense philanthropic power and activity; an age of usefulness and superb practicability. Its cultural aspects, its business aspects, its educational aspects are marvellously varied, stimulating, and successful, and they are, as summarized in these United States of America—the sole and single source for the inspiration and teaching of social reform—the realization of a new heaven upon earth. The workman lives here above the plane of the nobleman of the past, in his possession of sanitary comfort, and diversified diet, and sane and

healthy clothes—and the "submerged" are here brought within sight of the daylight of the upper air, and if they fall back into the dark waters of hebetude and slavery, it is the fault of caprice or surrender, of indolence or heredity.

Shall we not ask with deserving hearts that God, if He exists, if He speaks, shall speak again, for while material happiness spreads and distributes its blessings through wider and wider, deeper and deeper areas of communal life, still a weariness of the spirit attends it, and the disheartening thought of the emptyness of living blanches courage or with corrupting ease eats away the heart of morality. We deserve well of God, for we, in this country at least, have put dignity into the lives of the commonest, and are working with unabated zeal to multiply the stations of intelligence, through freedom and competency and peace. And yet—the very limitations of living, the set boundaries of life, the effectual questions of daily sustenance and labor, and inevitable sickness and deprivation, hold back the sway of complete contentment, and puncture, as with knives, the cushioned self-satisfaction of our hearts. What does it all mean, what is the end; whither, whence, why?

Certainly an illumination as to these things, some convincing voice, a new declaration of God himself, if that is possible, is desirable. We have Revelation and we have Philosophy, and we have the church, as it is called, but these seem slender props just now, when the ground on which they stand is so undermined, and the stepping centuries pass on, each with its fitful contribu-

tions of misery, horrors, and calamity; with us just now we have this incredible Russia, "Red Russia" as Mr. John Foster Frazer calls it, "a hundred millions of modern men, exhibiting in the twentieth century the unreasoning frenzies of cave-dwellers, forgetting all motives, understandable by civilized beings, and filling the land with ravin," and not a sound from the deaf heavens, or a movement among the rulers of the earth to stop it, and in it all a Church, and its vice-regent and embodiment—the Czar—still insisting in their warrant of infallibility.

Well these three are insufficient or appear so. The Revelations are discussed in the succeeding chapter, also the Church, and now as to Philosophy.

It is not clear under what image Philosophy presents itself. Should we seem to see a classic figure wearing a crown of light holding the key of knowledge, with outstretched finger pointing to a straight path of belief and conduct, or might she seem wan cheeked with aching eyes, trembling hands, and a vesture torn and mended, from whose lips the words of guidance fall with indecision, while she holds many keys, that she foolishly fumbles when we ask her for the one that unlocks the door of truth—or does a collective or plural image express Philosophy more wisely? Is it a throng, we see, of claimants, many voiced, and jostling each other, with eager importunity, their hands upraised and offering to us many things, the tolerant and discrete hedonism of Epicurus, the asceticism of the Stoics, the play of ideas and ideals of Plato, the solid earth of Aristotle, the mysticism of the Religious, a garish

Eclecticism, or the pallid and vanishing Idealisms, the subtle fascination of Pragmatism, or cold and torpid Indifference, or the ironies and savageness of Materialists and Pessimists? Here in the clustering and babel-voiced rout is a smiling Romanticism, amused and contemplative, with no clue to offer, but only singing the distiches of its playful criticism, or there the wistful gaze of Science, deaf to the clamors of schools, and only fixing its eyes and thought on the panorama of an evolving universe.

If we ask Philosophy, or the Philosophers, for some assurance as to God, they, or it, offer guesses, that take on a severity of conviction with some, or are as mildly colored with misgivings in others, or we are utterly repelled, and only the blank stare, the rapid repudiation, or an unwelcome grin receive our inquiry.

Now in a recent work of Prof. Rogers, who adopts a really concessional attitude to our hopes, the existence of God is defended though there is no rigor of demonstration, and the theory advances under a cloud of hovering "ifs and ands." But the argument is progressive, and it frankly starts at the beginning. He says at the opening of his book, "The Religious Conception of the World," that he "refers substantially to such a manner of conceiving the universe of reality in its large and essential character, as the general sound intelligence and common sense of the religious community would be able to take up in imagination with some measure of concreteness and objectivity, and recognize as the natural understanding of the historical Christian revelation."

But Prof. Rogers is surely not right in the outset, if he thinks people cannot live with tolerable and tolerating equipoise, without a precise conviction on the subject; that it is not, in later periods of development—these last in which we live— "a tremendously vital instinct, in the presence of which the attacks of the individual or the band of philosophic iconoclasts seem rather puny and powerless." We doubt it, and because we doubt it, this Plan, on a Christian basis of attainment, is here proposed. It is indisputable that great numbers of people are quite satisfied to dispense with much active religious belief today, as long as they can enjoy, in a measurable way the indulgence of their tastes, their aptitudes or their ambitions. And it has been curiously asserted in a recent work on Japan that with the Japanese, "religion is an extraneous matter, comprehending nothing like the transforming of the human consciousness, and not discovering the existence or even the need of a Great First Cause or Supreme Being."

It can be allowed that the fullest contentment in life, the best filling out of its range of feeling, and the deepest culture of its higher affinity or tendency, is secured through religious faith or practices but it does not follow that if, for any reason, adequate or inadequate, religious belief is weakened or abandoned, men and women cannot so reconstitute their conscious relation to each other, and to the world about them, as to yield to them satisfaction and good reasons for serenity and happiness. Certainly Philosophy will not restore religious convictions, though it may with plausible

force, increase the considerations that give them endurance and attractiveness and rationality. And quite as certainly a method of Revelation, as herein sought, might without argument or subtleties of dialectic, of the technical ingenuities of the philosophers, reawaken the religious instinct by a direct transmission of, so to speak, supernatural facts, and reconsolidate the scattered impulses to faith and endow our susceptibilities with an old-time fervor. Philosophy would not in any case do it, for Philosophy is only understood, is only listened to by a group of trained minds, conferring in stimulating solitudes, and so attuned by meditation to a range of ideas, and to a vocabulary of precision, that the substance of their deliberations can only belong to an utterly unimportant, and numerically a very minute portion of the earth's population. And at the best these thinkers only frame a reasonable "hypothesis."

Prof. Rogers beautifully, under limitations perhaps truthfully, says "if human life becomes slowly settled, harmonious, and self-justifying, when we act upon the assumption that the universe has a certain ideal constitution, then we have the same right, in kind if not in degree, to accept this as a verification of our faith, as we have to accept the progressive discovery of regularities in perceptual experience as a verification of our originally blind faith in order and reason."

But is this verification so conclusive, when, looking from ourselves perchance—if our station abounds in satisfying and natural joys—we see the harsh ordeals of life, or hear the cries of an incessant greed, watch the

"dull uniformity of mischief," or note crushing weights of misery? Would not Prof. Rogers himself welcome a new affirmation by God himself, which too, let us prefer, should not diminish the beauty and the interest of the wonder-world about us, but which might make less hazardous to our minds, to our scientific intellect, the hypothesis of a God. Prof. Rogers himself says "our whole argument rests upon two postulates, or prejudices, if one chooses so to call them; and while these can be made to seem reasonable in the light of a developed experience, they can in the nature of the case be submitted to no decisive test," and indeed without dwelling on it, Prof. Rogers' hypothesis of God's relations to man would not be generally, we think, acceptable, nor indeed, with vraisimilitude, quite thinkable.

CHAPTER VI

The Two Revelations

Burke in his Reflections on the French Revolution explained his deepest convictions when he wrote, "we know, and it is our pride to know, that man is by his constitution a religious animal; that atheism is against, not only our reason, but our instincts; and that it can not prevail long. But if, in the moment of riot, and in a drunken delirium from the hot spirit drawn out of the alembic of hell, we should uncover our nakedness, by throwing off that Christian religion which has been hitherto our boast and comfort, and one great source of civilization amongst us, and among many other nations; we are apprehensive (being well aware that the mind will not endure a void) that some uncouth, pernicious and degrading superstition might take place of it."

Today the world seems likely to lose its dogmatic faith, but it is not nearly so apparent that superstition will take its place, unless the stupid spiritualistic cults, the tepid shallowness of Christian Science, and mere political and social nostrums may be so interpreted in this uncomplimentary vein. We seem rather to be reverting to a Lucretian frame of mind, accepting no interventions, tolerating no supervisions, credulous in our devotion to Nature, and sapiently careless of anything more or less important than Systems of Nomenclature, and Origins of Species.

Certainly it is an overpowering reflection, that we are placed in a world of perversity and confusion, from some points of view, of sobriety and enforced legality from others, but at any and all times an essentially unknown world. Philosophy has pretty well convinced us that we do not, cannot, receive the real nature of objects outside of us, foreign to us, which come to us only as sensuous impressions, and these qualified, or actually created by subjective mental or nervous conditions; that we live in a world simply mirrored to us from our own minds, and that no thought could be more hopeless or extravagant than to suppose we can introduce that world into our consciousness, except by the second-hand study of conscious perceptions, and that while millions of observers may see the same things in a porphyritic rock, their agreement in sensation has no inevitable weight as to telling us what the so-called porphyry is.

This sense of bewilderment deepens into despair, or might—were it a matter of intellectual concern to us—when we turn from the invading claims of stones and animals, sky and earth, to the thoughts concerning our essence, our destiny, our authorization, our use; and regarding, from a philosophic necessity, the imperative value of a closed circuit of elucidation, we should feel that a system of this sort, unexplained, or inexplicable, was deeply infected with an illogical taint.

The only saving chain of experiences would be in a Revelation, for from the established conclusions of philosophy, we cannot determine certainty ourselves. Philosophy with great talents seems after all absurdly feeble. Mallock speaking of Spencer's strange but

partial reversion from his own results in philosophy says, "of all the saddening reflections which the approach of death suggested to him, the most saddening was the reflection that there might, at the back of the universe, be no consciousness at all but merely a species of groping protoplasmic mind which breaks into transitory consciousness in feeble units like ourselves."

A revelation might not be complete, nor indeed, in a strict sense, of any scientific value, but it might, in the one particular of our eternal relations, be more or less explicit, at least so far, as to enable us to go on living with patience and with expectation. Well; there are for us Indo-Europeans, occupants of Europe and America, two such revelations, and because of them, critics of this Plan will protest, that we do not need a third. Whether we do or do not is then the subject of this chapter.

If the revelations pointed to by Christians as indubitable documents of divine origin, viz. the Old and the New Testaments are really such, then at once we can infer that revelations, like schools of art and systems of politics, while having contents permanently fixed for all time, derive a color, an emotional aroma, as the phrase goes, and employ agents, suitable for the times to which they minister, that they attain veracity for these, if they reflect their temper, or gather in themselves episodes and actors and sentiments, that harmonize with the temperament and culture of the day. A revelation therefore like any other temporal incident may be looked at from several points of view, some of them purely "profane" or secular, others hermeneutical and religious, and the value or authenticity of the latter

will vary in a relative way to the credence given in the revelation to the former.

If from a profane or secular standpoint, the statements in a Revelation are incredible, then the symbolic or moral meanings, blended with, or derivative from them must participate sensibly in their weakness. If a messenger carried to a beleaguered city the announcement that the commander of the besieging forces was an incorporeal and an invisible spirit, his words might—and today certainly would—receive less attention if in the same breath he asserted that in the camp he had left, water flowed uphill, and stones thrown into the air continued their flight upward, until lost to sight and, presumably unarrested at the confines of the earth's atmosphere, they passed outward into space. And yet it is clear enough that in certain phases of mental development the combination of the miraculous happenings with the supersensual claims of the hostile chief would seem absolutely congruous, and form a union of conceptions properly impregnated throughout with wonder and mystery. The fealty to a revelation will have, must have, something to do with the relevancy of its secular contents to the mental, emotional and moral impressionability of its auditors. The revelations we are considering do not for this day and generation assume quite such a congruity.

Without considering all the implications of the two Christian revelations it is sufficient to attribute to the first—the Old Testament—the revelation of a God, to the second—the New Testament—the revelation of a Saviour, and an individual Immortality.

Now this age has attained a pretty well grounded belief in a classified series of facts relating to the material organization of this earth and its past geological history: it is further imbued with an almost stolid and unshakable faith in the irrevocable persistency of natural law: it is wonderfully learned in the processes of life and matter, and it cultivates an interior logic of apprehension that condemns deceit, and the innuendoes of round-about and apologetic explanations. The first revelation bearing its message, august and majestic, encloses it in a group of affirmations that the modern mind refuses to believe, and when the scrutiny of scholars is fastened on the document itself, and their sharp witted criticism is permitted to play over its pages they emphatically declare that it is a mixture of documents, that much of it is ethnic myth, that the traditional views of its authorship and the assumed chronological order of its parts are demonstrably wrong.

The very opening chapter of the Old Testament dismays the literal scientific mind, and, as it was for a long time regarded by the Church, it would still continue to dismay it. Taken in its literal sense it is immediately relegated to the impossible and the absurd, and although as a Cosmogony it is immensely superior, and more intelligent, than those afforded by the inventions of other cultivations than the Israelitic, it utterly fails in exactness.

It has an evolutionary bias, and should merit well from an unprejudiced perusal, as a rather advanced type of cosmological imagery. But the picture that succeeds it, of the Garden of Eden and the story of the

derivation of Eve and the conversations and relations of the occupants of the Garden and God are today regarded with an averted glance by the orthodox, even, and to the rest of the world become a transparent rebus of poetic symbols.

Francis Bacon centuries ago alluded to the "extreme levity" of those who endeavored to extract a "system of philosophy from the first chapter of Genesis," although such a stricture is misleading, as the chapter has sublimity, and one of the commonplaces of literature is the just admiration of Longinus for the simple and pregnant utterance of its imposing conceptions. The Old Testament certainly begins with an uncompromising amplitude of distinctness and authority; "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"; but when the glass of philological criticism is suspended over this extraordinary writing, two narratives are revealed, one of which affirms Yahweh or Jahveh to be the originator of all things, the second, intertwined with the first, but occupying the first chapter of Genesis exclusively, referring the origins to Elohim, a plural noun meaning "powers," gods; and sceptical students instantly assure us that the plural deity is perhaps the later, representing the influence of Babylonian quasi-science, while Yahweh they insist (it might be suggested that their insistence is often very much like intemperate and obstinate guessing, under the impetus of a fever of slavish doubting) was a Thunder God or Nature God (Winckler, Tiele) because the same word is applied to the apparition of Samuel in the story of the Witch of Endor.

We are thus landed, after further deductions and rather aphoristic surmises in the conception, that "the Hebrews are a group of agricultural and pastoral but warlike tribes of Semitic speech with household gods and local deities, living among communities at the same or a higher culture state" (Robertson), that the cult of Yahweh was not a primordial creed but a "successful tyranny of one local cult over others" (Robertson); that (Winckler, Meyer) it was not even at first established in Palestine, but derived from Sinaitic influences and that, far on in time, after the first fathers or patriarchs of Israel had disappeared, and when kings ruled in Israel, the Yahweh symbol became regnant, while (rather self-disparagingly) Robertson says "the inveterate usage in the Bible-making period, of forging and interpolating ancient or pretended writings, makes it impossible to construct any detailed history of the rise of Yahwism."

With this destructive invasion of the verbal construction of the initial narrative of the revelation, and an uneasy sense of its indeterminate and unsatisfactory accordance with scientific truth, we confront the picture of the Garden of Eden, and halt wonder stricken before a plain work of imagination and poetic allegory. While for the purposes of revelation, leniently considered, the poem had its instructive and didactic uses, and might, along the early stages of ethnic and ethical development, enforce an ennobling concession to the vindictive supremacy of Sin, and inflame the ardor of resentment and rebuke at its effects; yet to be accepted now as a historic incident summarizing a theological

solution of the moral problem is a most mad and hazardous design.

And surely when we open the pages of modern comparative religious studies we are not permitted long to dally with any illusions as to its unique and incomparable quality. It has been alluded to by Lyman Abbott as "a myth of wonderful beauty," and he also says that it "disappears from the face of the earth absolutely, and never again is mentioned in the sacred history, or in any other." But we are not long left in ignorance as to the worship of trees, and the early assumption of a sacred character by the woods and trees, in whose shadowy recesses and amid whose whispering arms a world of occult wonder seemed to have its habitation. Sayce tells us that (Hibbert Lectures), "the primitive house of Tammuz (a Babylonian Deity) had been in that garden of Edin or Eden which Babylonian tradition placed in the immediate vicinity of Eridu (an ancient holy city of precedence and great dignity), where

> A stalk grew, over-shadowing: In a holy place did it grow:
> Its root was of white crystal, which stretched towards the deep:"

which Sayce reminds us recalls the famous *Yggdrasill* of Norse mythology, the world tree, whose roots descend into the world of death while its branches rise into Asgard, the heaven of the Gods.*

*As an example of the disillusions enforced by modern profound research, in Mr. R. C. Thompson's The Devils and Evil Spirits of Babylonia, wherein this industrious and delving student has revealed the meanings of the so-called "evil spirit texts," we find for instance that a tablet in the British Museum—which was supposed, and confidently referred to, as containing an allusion to the Garden of Eden, has nothing to do with that paradise, and that the tree mentioned on it, interpreted as the Tree of Life, is the *kish-kanu* plant which grew in Eridu, and was assumed to have magical properties.

There does indeed seem then to be something connected with the Eden fable of a purely and rather unique character, which might lead us to attribute to it a kind of esoteric meaning, not inaptly allied to revelation. But it is certainly *fable*, and just as certainly it has been regarded as history, and expositions of learned men have dwelt upon its uses and application. Now this is disconcerting, and a disquieting disillusion remains, after we have gotten to our last position of amiable and admiring sufferance. A revelation beginning with the origins of human life, in a religious sense, should we think possess an indubitable and finished exactitude, or at least not be of such stuff as to take on the chameleon tints of history and fable according to the varying lights of credulity or scholarship. We derive an uneasy feeling of mercantile accommodation, as involved in its prescriptions and reluctantly succumb to the impressions of a shadowy rebuke of deception. Allegory and parable hardly take the place of facts, in a momentous narrative dealing with ultimate theological verities, and while we can willingly suspend judgment, knowing all the disabilities of the early ages of faith and ethnic opaqueness, we do confess to a complete willingness to receive more light, asserting that mere exegesis and the play of decorative apologies will not compensate for the unapparelled truth. It has been the boast of Protestantism to make the Bible preeminent and infallible, to erect it into a source of dogma contrarient to the inspiration and authority of the Papacy; but here, at the very beginning, we feel that "the Protestant dogma of the infallibility of the Bible, is not only

inconceivable in thought—it is also useless in fact" (Sabatier).

And no sooner have we recovered from a strange wonderment and partial revolt over the Eden story, than our eyes peruse the anomalous narrative of the Flood, with its protagonist Noah, and the impossible assemblage of its creatures, the submerged earth, and the impracticable barn of an ark, and sinking back into a labyrinth of disturbing queries, which this story awakens, we encounter the manifold versions of the same story as a traditional possession of many early civilizations. This indeed could be interpreted as corroborative of the Bible statement, but the Bible statement remains impugned nevertheless for its impossible and legendary features, which give to it somehow an aggravating expression of juvenile fragility. When we widen our scope of contemplation, and follow the sacred theme through Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Joshua, the books especially dealing with the rise and establishment of the Jewish religion, and enclosing the germinal tracts of revelation, we can scarcely arise from our study, provided as we may be with the research results of modern Hebrew scholars and orientalists, without feeling that for the requirements of an enlightened faith, a new, a modern revelation would seem deeply and critically necessary.

The sense of disturbance, the fluctuating uneasiness of our reliance on the events described in these pages of the Bible, brought about by the sharp dissonance of modern feeling with archaic conditions, is quite

seriously heightened when we realize that it appears conceded that the Pentateuch has been misconceived and ignorantly understood. In the first place it is not the work of Moses, as was implicitly believed for so many years, and that if there were Mosaic fragments in it, they formed part of a patchwork compiled or redacted from several sources, and put together or edited at a period, centuries later than the date of the assumed author's life and death, and that that redaction is composite, and bears the mark of many hands, is indeed, to quote Kuenen, from "the sacerdotal corporation of Jerusalem."

In fact, it appears that the prevalent view among scholars makes the prophecies chronologically precede the priestly legislation (Leviticus), and the priestly historiography (Genesis, Exodus). Now while there is a sure consensus among scholars as to the composite character of the biblical narrative, contained in the so-called Pentateuch (viz. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy) and there seems to have developed among them the conviction, which rests in their minds upon irrefragable proof, that much of the Pentateuch was composed during or after the Exile, (viz. the transference of the Hebrews to Babylon), the precise constitution of these books is not accordantly agreed upon.

The first adherents of the newer views, with regard to the authorship and composition of the Pentateuch, were inclined to allow the existence of the "Book of Origins," (the earlier Elohist), or "Grundschrift," in which were "embedded still more ancient fragments, some of them

Mosaic," and that "the Deuteronomist, a contemporary of Manasseh or Josiah, was the redactor of the Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua, and it was he who brought them into the form in which they now lie before us. He interwove or inserted his own laws and narrative into the work of the Yahweh (Jehovist) that dated from the eighth century B. C., and was therefore about a hundred years old" (Kuenen).

But as early as 1860 Kuenen confesses to a doubt as to the correctness of the above position, and his suspicions were repeated in the minds of other students. The assumption outlined above incorporated the tacit concession that the Pentateuch preceded the Psalms and the Prophets, and antedated the years of the Exile of the People of Israel. The so-called "Erganzunghypothesis" or filling in hypothesis, insisted that the original groundwork of the Hexateuch was to be found in the body of Elohistic passages, and belonged to a single author—while the Yahwistic and deuteronomic laws and legends were later additions. This view was invalidated by the trenchant criticism of Bishop Colenso of Natal, who, besides, as Kuenen says "applying the test of those universal laws of time and space from which no chain of phenomena can escape," pointed out that the hitherto unassailed "grundschrift" is utterly untrustworthy, and while rejecting its chronological priority, he led the way by his "pulverizing criticism," to its keener scrutiny, which process of examination conducted by Popper, Geiger, Graf, finally landed biblical criticism in views immensely more radical and disintegrating in their influence upon traditional reverence for the "scriptures."

For now it was perceived and restated in various ways, with individual modifications that much, if not all, of the material composing the "grundschrift" was comparatively recent, and the compilation of one or several hands as late as Ezra, or even subsequent to 450 B. C., that the historical portions of the grundschrift involved an identical workmanship with the priestly legislation, and that the account of creation, so instinctively given priority, issues from the same historiographic impulse that recorded the Priestly Codex, and that internal evidence established the fact that the priestly legislation recorded, was not contemporaneous, so far as its essential elements could be anticipated, with the events to which it was referred.

Again the two accounts of the Creation, of the Flood, of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, of Joseph coming into Egypt, of the name Israel and other instances reveal the composite character of the Genesis chapters, which is supported by linguistic differences, and indicate a late period of arrangement and composition.

Kuenen remarks that "the representations in the later books of the Hexateuch simply defy the conditions of space and time to which every event is subject, and by which therefore, every narrative may be tested. The exodus, the wandering, the passage of the Jordan and the settlement in Canaan, as they are described in the Hexateuch, simply could not have happened. We strive in vain to conceive their occurrence as long as we retain the data of the Hexateuch itself"; "this representation of the course of events is not sporadic,

but appears throughout, and is sometimes rounded into a complete system which at first produces the impression of an accurate reflex of the facts, but, when we discover that it cannot possibly be such, must be supposed to owe its origin to the constructive imagination which works upon unhistorical premises as readily as though they were facts"; "they show the unmistakable traces of the condensing and concentrating process that must have preceded their committal to writing: and this fresh confirmation of their later origin serves at the same time to explain the unhistorical presentation of the facts which we have noted, and which could not but result from such a process of evolution" (Kuenen).

In Kuenen's learned and energetic analysis of the Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua, as in the painstaking treatises of all the scholars, we have presented to us a wondrously minute picking out of correspondences and discrepancies in paragraphs or verses, which can only be compared to the solicitous scrutiny of a microscopist over a sectionized rock, or over the divergent developments of a fertilized egg.

It seems certainly very honest and mercilessly unsparing of the redactor's time and patience, but in innumerable details there is so much contradiction and variance of inference, among these devoted men that while their main conclusions perhaps remain unshaken they do not always force us to a single result, as to all of its parts. They disclose much interpolation, alteration, revision; and the inadvertencies, inconsistencies, and variability of the narratives in the Pentateuch are made to appear endless. The Deuteronomist is the

arch culprit in this matter, and to him is due the jointure of the sacred books, their contents and manipulation, though we are assured that "there is no evidence that the Deuteronomist and his followers were acquainted with the priestly law and narrative."

The prophets are given precedence, and made the first in time of the written books, because they offer no evidence of an acquaintance with a written law. As Kuenen considers it, "at least five centuries had elapsed since the time of Moses, when these prophets flourished, whose writings we still possess. A Mosaic law book, rendered venerable by its origin and high antiquity, and itself laying claim to a quite exceptionable authority must have been constantly cited and upheld against the people by any teachers who recognized it. But there is not a trace."

The connexion of Ezekiel is made closer than that of any other prophet with the Hexateuch. Jeremiah has been regarded by some authorities as the Deuteronomist himself, but others reject it. The Minor prophets, Amos, Hosea, are early, the Psalms, Proverbs, and Job, Ecclesiasticus, Ecclesiastes, similarly are early, and antedate the *tora* viz., the Pentateuch, as to their canonical and finished form. It may be generally believed that the Mosaic tora was in existence as early as the middle of the fifth century B. C., and that the ordinances were then principally put in practice through the influence of Ezra and Nehemiah. As to the two elemental strains of revelation, the Yahwistic and the Elohistic, these documents were composed within the ninth or at the beginning of the

eighth century B. C. Both were well received but they underwent expansion and were recast at a period later than 650; viz., the Jahvistic and Elohistic documents were combined into a single whole.

But we are not simply disconcerted in our preconceptions as to the relativity and authority of the five primary books of the Old Testament, by the students, but we are tempted with much argument and demonstration to believe many other things which transform our revelation, in part at least, into a chronicle of ethnic mythology and bring it with bewildering suddenness into some sort of a counterpart to the legends and anthropomorphic nature cults of early races.

We are told that David was a Semitic deity, that Saul and Solomon also were God-names, as was Samuel, that Samson is a solar myth, that Jacob and Joseph were Old Canaanitish deities, that Moses was a name for more than one Semitic god, and "in particular stood for a Sun-God," that Abraham and Isaac "appear to be ancient deities," that Joshua and Elijah and Elisha were all derivative from solar embodiments (Sayce, Hitzig, Lenormant, Winckler, quoted by Robertson) and before these disturbing theories (for after all a little consideration shows them to be little else) we feel the sacred sheen of interest and the sanctity of age lose their brightness, and decline into a commonplace obscurity not quite assuring.

We are further shown, or at least with learned plausibility we are patiently taught, to reflect that monotheism was not an aboriginal possession of the Jews, that they shared it with other Semitic tribes, that Yahweh

was "symbolized and worshipped in the image of a young bull, a usage associated with the neighboring Semitic cult of Moloch," that it arose in the midst of rival practices, and consummated its later predominance by purely secular means, that indeed so much assigned to the Hebrews as elevated in religious dogma was of late origin, and not unlikely engendered by contact with other civilizations to whom the prestige of any revelation is not conceded, and indeed, in the course of these sweeping destructions of orthodox formularies, the belief of any considerable enslavement of the Jews in Egypt is scouted by the most recent analysts.

The supremacy of Jerusalem as the earthly dwelling place of Jehovah was a late innovation and might be considered as the victory of an especial class of religionists, or of an influential clan. There had been a temple at Shiloh, Mt. Ephraim, Bochin, Ophra, Mocpha, Bethel, Rana, Gilgal, Bethlehem, Hebron, Arauna, Gibeon, and long after the building of the temple at Jerusalem the same liberty prevailed. Indeed we seem to be shown a group of Northern Semites influenced by the Assyrian or Babylonian religion with traditions of uncertain origin assuming a monotheistic faith through the individual earnestness and the zeal of the prophets: "this prophetic movement" says Tiele, "gave rise to a religious sect or nomistic religion, the foundations of which were firmly laid before the captivity, by the code prepared under Josiah, and during the captivity and after it by Ezekiel and the priestly legislation, and which was organized, chiefly by Ezra as a priestly com-

munity"; and we are elsewhere unreservedly assured that at the commencement the subject of man's origin had its abode in the divinity schools; it was taught by theologians; the opening chapters of Genesis constituted the accepted text-book; now in 1905 the subject is assigned to the anthropological laboratory.

And of course when we have gotten through all this we are a little aghast, and become reflective and melancholy and the craving cry for another revelation becomes urgent and reasonable.

Dr. George Adam Smith (Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament) has said that the Higher Criticism is to a remarkable extent corroborated by the evidence of archaeology and geography, and that the internal evidence supporting it is almost irrefutable, and that in the verbal inspection indefatigably construed—phraseology, interests, religious conceptions and historical traditions reveal four main documents, "all the more distinct that they often present the same subjects or events in different ways," but which convince us that "we are in touch, not with phantasms of modern scholarship, but with ancient realities, the original constituents of our curiously composite Scriptures. Discrepancies, fatal to the traditional theory, will explain themselves: the history, instead of being full of contradictions, will fall into the lines of a reasonable development, and the Divine education of Isreal become more apparent than ever."

Dr. Smith claims an indemnity for these rearrangements, dislocations and subversions, and says with uncommon skill "consider how all else lies before us

unquestioned by criticism. Unquestioned? I should rather say fortified, explored, illuminated, made habitable for modern men. The labors of the prophets, the doom and Fall of Northern Israel, the carriage of Jerusalem through her awful crisis upon the solitary faith of Isaiah; his victory; the reaction under Manasseh, and the recrudescence of heathenism; the discovery of Deuteronomy and the reforms of Josiah; the confidence of the people in an external righteousness, and their disillusionment by Josiah's tragic death at Megiddo: the second reaction to heathenism under Jehoiakim; the story of the Exile and of the Return; the brilliant hopes and their disappointment; the struggle with foreign tyrants and native traitors, for the nation's purity and loyalty to God; the growth of legalism and of the sweet personal piety which grew behind the Law like a garden of lilies within a hedge of thorns; the story of the Diaspora, and of contact with alien systems of culture and religion; the story of righteous suffering in meditation upon its meaning; the rise of speculation and of the schools of the teachers, who applied the fear of Jahweh and the wisdom which springs from it to the every day life of men. No historical criticism takes away these fields from the preacher of today. Across them he may move with all the confidence and boldness of the fathers—nay with more freshness, more insight, more agility, for the text is clearer, the discrepancies explained, the allusions better understood and all the old life requickened, out of which those prophets and reformers, those psalmists and wise men, with all their literature originally sprung."

This is doubtless all true, but something has vanished. The strange and terror stricken sense that the proclamation of a God comes from the outer realms of divine consciousness and therefore carries with it an unqualified certainty, no matter how much the affairs of life bring it into temporary discredit, has gone. And this certainty is precisely the only thing that meets the requirements of an incessant skepticism. That there are virtue and beauty and high sentiments and inspiring thoughts and a genial symbolism and the play of didactic imagery in the Bible, will not answer alone.

It is not an apodictical assertion we are after but an assertion unprovable, yet from the circumstances and the source of its utterance absolute and final. We do not wish, nor can we endure to think, with Dr. Lyman Abbott that Moses becomes a "shadowy figure, so far in the remote past that in studying the details of his life it is impossible scientifically to separate the legendary from the historical."

We are disturbed, and rightly so, when Mr. Boscawen for instance tells us (The First of Empires) that Ezra and his "Great Synagogue" "drew largely upon Babylonian legends of the Creation and Flood for the narratives which they narrated or edited, and that Babylonian literature has an antiquity some two or three thousand years greater than that of the writings which are attributed to Moses, and even of the oldest portions of them."

It is no satisfaction, at least for the moral intensity of our hopes, to ruminate with Prof. George Santayana that "the earlier Hebrews, as their own records depict them, had a mythology and cultus extremely like that of

other Semitic people—that their religion consisted in local rites, in lunar feasts, in sooth-sayings and oracles, in legends about divine apparitions commemorated in the spots they had made holy. These spots, as in all the rest of the world, were tombs, wells, great trees, and, above all, the tops of mountains. Scripture was codified, proclaimed and given out formally to be inspired by Jehovah and written by Moses."

It is not desirable for our peace of mind to accept the mellow resignation of Dr. Abbott when he contentedly murmurs "the hypothesis that the unknown writer of Genesis took these early legends and rewrote them, writing God into them, or that the people retold them, with the national consciousness of God wrought into them, is far more probable and quite as spiritual as the hypothesis that these narratives were supernaturally revealed to the historian, or that they were miraculously preserved and handed down from generation to generation until they reached him as an infallible record of events long anterior"; all of which is nonsense.

No! without a revelation this question whether there is a God or not is unanswered and unanswerable, and a revelation dissolved away into an ordinary daemonic and ethnic tale, the legitimate companion piece of all other racial speculations, however much more august in moral dignity and poetic suasion, will not satisfy the insufferable challenge of the suffering world, of which suffering perhaps Dr. Abbott knows little. Let God speak once more, or let us with dreaming and tearful eyes turn again to the "Riddle of the World," and finally with composure fix a new solution.

And as to the New Testament does it as a revelation need renewal? Or more gently shall we ask, does it need restatement? We are not long left in doubt if we turn to contemporaneous studies, that the central and supernatural fact of the New Testament revelation—the divine Sonship of Christ—is denied, and has for thousands and thousands become a myth.

We soon confront an aggressive criticism besides, which, with its textual analysis throws the gospels into some confusion, and at least on the fourth—St. John's—empties a flood of conjecture that makes it appear something like a foreign and discordant invention, saturated with alien mysticism and snatching only from the commonplace synoptic gospels suggestions which have been elaborated into a neo-platonic poem.

Christianity like Hebraism has been thrust down into the classes of natural phenomena and subordinated to the world-wide ethico-religious impulses of men; and all the elements of supernaturalism, the statements of transcendental import exactingly ejected or confidently scored as fiction. In a few cases this has been done with a relentless enmity to the person of Christ, more widely with reverent care to his unique nature but with an unabashed and insistent scientific objectivity.

For instance such a work as M. Ernest Havet's Le Christianisme et ses Origines, voluminously (and a little wearisomely) struggling through Grecian, Roman and Jewish thought upon a search of paramount interest to discover how far the sentiments of Christianity had been already anticipated and disseminated like a conciliatory fragrance through national apprehensions,

bows to the inherent beauty of the Prophet and his system, but places both in the class of rational and logical events and fights hard to diminish the individualistic meaning and elevation of Christ himself.

He especially engages the problem of showing how deeply the soil of Gentile conceptions and feelings was prepared for, or already grew, the flowers of Christian hopes and sentiments. "Sans discuter ni combattre les doctrines, je m'attachais a montrer que la revolution qui a fait du monde hellenique le monde chrêtien n'a rien de brusque, rien qui sente le miracle ou le mystere; que le christianisme etait deja en grande partie dans l'hellenisme, et en est sorti naturellement. J'ajoutais cependant qu'il y a autre chose dans le christianisme que l'hellenisme et d'abord le judaisme, qui en est un element considerable. C'est cet element que j'ai a reconnaitre aujourd 'hui; on verra que le christianisme doit quelque fois plus au judaisme qu'il ne l'avoue."

Nor perhaps are we less wonder stricken when we read in Sabatier (Religions of Authority); "therefore we must not be surprised when very conservative theologians, with Mr. F. Godet at their head, resolutely break with the old Christology and deny the infallibility of Jesus. For his general culture he was reduced, like us, to the testimony of his senses and of men who were his contemporaries, and to national traditions bequeathed by their ancestors. This avowal, once made, opens a breach which cannot again be closed. What may in future pass through it criticism alone can tell. For Mr. Godet, for example, the opinions of Jesus as to the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch or the

Davidic authorship of Psalm CX are simply traditional opinions which leave untouched the freedom of modern science. His son, Mr. George Godet, goes a step further. He judges that it is not possible to attribute to Jesus the views of Newton or Laplace as to the structure of the universe, and that he probably held those which we find in the first chapters of Genesis. Next comes M. Leopold Monod, with the question, whether the same reflections do not apply to demoniac possession and demonology. Still others arise and point out that Jesus had the same notions as all the pious Jews of his time, as to the Kingdom of God, and the imminent end of the world. The declaration of Jesus, 'Heaven and Earth shall pass away but my words shall not pass away,' is often cited with triumphant emphasis. What irony! The context shows that these words refer precisely to prophecies which, if the text has been correctly preserved, have been negatived by the events. We are then forced either to doubt the literal form of these discourses or to apply the Saviour's declaration to some other subject."

Now much of all this discussion, if it does not fundamentally uproot our previous attitude toward the Christian revelation, leaves us as Mr. Benson describes the state of mind of Hugh Neville (Beside Still Waters) "if he was not in a position to affirm with certitude the truth of the recorded events which attained the origin of the Christian revelation, he could yet affirm with confidence that in the teaching of Christ a higher range of emotion had been reached than had ever been approached before;" though if M. Havet's contentions

are accepted even this would be in a large measure dissipated.

As Dr. Briggs tells us that the only prophetic writings which are certainly by one author are Joel, Jonah, Zephariah, Haggai, Malachi, Nahun in the Old Testament, so he informs us with the same precision that in the New, "the gospel of Matthew is a compilation using the gospel of Mark and the Logia of Matthew as the chief sources. The gospel of Luke is a compilation, using the same gospel of Mark and the Logia of Matthew, and also other hebraic sources for its gospel of the infancy, and possibly also, another source for the Perean ministry. The book of Acts is a compilation, using a hebraic narrative of the early Jerusalem Church, and the *We* narrative of a co-traveler with Paul, and probably other sources. The gospel of John is also partly a compilation, using an earlier gospel of John in the Hebrew language, and the Hymn to the Logos in the Prologue;" all of which added to conjunctional and contributary causes for distruct does not, in all truth and honesty, strengthen confidence or relieve distrust.

No one who has read Hellbeck of Bannisdale with an understanding mind but must have felt a natural sympathy with Miss Laura Fountain, and probably entered more deeply into an intelligent compassion for her scruples, if they have gone through a slow, perhaps intolerable, process of mental change, in which religious convictions crumble and dissolve;—and such an one realizes that nothing could restore those convictions but a new revelation.

It is quite apparent that one need not go far off the

beaten path of orthodox tradition to have his ears numbed with vociferations that Christ was only an extraordinary man, and that his supernatural advent is a fabric of fancy, an interesting delusion, and false. Such an one feels that when all is said and done, when he has reviewed his former attitude to the Bible in the light of all these new disclosures, and that, though these latter should have (in view of the intrinsic preeminence of the Bible's message and its sharp relief above the insane obscenities and stupid inanities which formed the starting points of Indian or Grecian mythology) no indispensable expelling or expunging power; yet, by a temperamental accident or tendency his faith has frightfully shrunk, or altered its old and honorable lineaments.

Our Christian faith has its difficulties, even for the boundless credulity of savages, and as Dr. Moffat says (quoted by Andrew Lang, Myth, Ritual, and Religion) "to speak of the Creation, the Fall, and the Resurrection, seemed more fabulous, extravagant, and ludicrous to them, than their own vain stories of lions and hyenas," and it was a Zulu, says Lang "who suggested to Bishop Colenso his doubts about the historical character of the Noachian Deluge."

Perhaps the Christian faith involves just such an antinomy that nothing but revelation can force reason to succumb to its sublime incredibleness; therefore if the old revelations have lost their power, I mean in the dogmatic and supernatural sense, why should it be considered irrelevant or irreverent to ask for another? and that the other can be quite different from the for-

mer two, and bring within itself the coalescence of the modern temper with a theological ascription, is argued in a succeeding chapter.

To those who insist that the revelations we have, are adequate, the foregoing paragraphs of this chapter are meant to demonstrate the utter reasonableness of asking for their confirmation, since they have been progressively diminished in their authority by study and research.* We all know how true this is, and to what an extent today among cultivated Christians the difficult statements, the "hard" doctrine is glossed over, discarded, or forgotten.

And doubt is more patently nourished when observation seems to show us that neither are the premises of the revelation kept, nor that the present aspect of the world, or its tortuous and stumbling history reveals an indisputable divine guidance. Perhaps to ask for a revelation of any kind, or to seek reliance upon one, might place us, in the estimation of thinkers, as Prof. Royce, with "such persons who think that a Spirit that is not constantly producing noteworthy effects, and so getting himself in the newspapers, would seem unreal. Therefore to such persons Religious Idealism depends for its life and warmth upon the vividness and the

*Auguste Sabatier—a Christian scholar—says (Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit) "textual criticism was not less fatal to the dogma than exegesis. Searching out and collecting the manuscripts, collating the writings of the Fathers and the ancient versions, scholars accumulated various readings on the margins of the New Testament, demonstrating that, though the sacred text had been most piously preserved, it had by no means escaped the accidents that befall human things; that differences had accumulated in proportion as copies had been made; that it was therefore, often necessary to be content with conjectures and probability; and that since the pure, original text could not be restored with any degree of certainty, the doctrine of verbal inspiration, *usque ad voces et consones*, no longer applied to anything, and had become useless."

impressiveness of these phenomenal indications of the action of the great spirit." But we defy anyone to show outside of a revelation (assuming of course its existence or possible existence) where certainty or even certitude can be found in the schools of philosophy, much less expected, in the fluttering and dishevelled dreams of doctrinaires and lunatics.

CHAPTER VII

The Church

If we turn with saddened hearts from the Revelations, we find ourselves confronting the Church, and are enlisted by its adherents in an inquiry how far it should be considered as holding the answer to the inveterate questions we have been asking.

If we are free in our judgment and have discharged all preconceptions in the matter we might, with justification, ask, where, or what is the Church? Christianity has some one hundred sorts of organizations which with varying emphasis and ardor claim to be the Church, and a flourishing group of believers have established a recent experiment on the deciduous doctrines of a Mrs. Eddy, with a strangely sleepy and affected book—"A Guide to the Scriptures"—as an inspiration, and are called the Church also.

Are all these forms of the church to be combined and reintegrated and then to express to us an authoritative exposition of the church's voice and message? Hardly. Their points of contrast are indeed not so great as to preclude a mental conception of their unity in one or two primordial affirmations—as; that there is a God; that there is a Future life; that there has been a Revelation. But in so far as they have had an historical development, and as their own existence presupposes revelation, or some kind of ordination, involving his-

tory, it seems, on the face of it, a reasonable prerequisite and proposition to find out which of all the phases of the Christian church and establishment came first in time, which first subserved the purposes of the revelation, that is supposed to have created a church; for the church as a purely human or social institution is quite impoverished of any coercive authority over us or any one, unless it proves its authenticity as a derivative process from the revelation.

And right here we could disestablish the church and its claims at once, by pointing to the conclusion of the last chapter, that the revelation is involved in doubt, which carries with it an inclusive reference of doubt for all of its lineal results, among which is the church. Yet because of an aesthetic and moral sense of the enormous social consequences connoted by the Christian church, an appreciation of its extraordinary historical prestige, and the homage exacted by the stupendous assemblage of devotion, energy and ability incorporated in it, now and in the past, we shall not take advantage (the word is self-accusative alone in an inquiry meant to be unbiased, free and frankly inquisitive) of the logical objection that an institution, apparently founded on a perceived and written document, falls with the impeachment or disproof of the document.

Let us locate and interrogate this church; for at least it is conceivable that in some way it may possess a superiority to the so-called revelation—the Bible which after all is, as we know it, a series of written symbols, conveying intelligible ideas. The church could have been propagated in such historical propinquity to

supernatural events, as to carry on, by a personal objective ministration and a subjective spiritual reflexion the idea or the message of a revelation, better than corrupted texts or invincibly defective chronicles.

That seems a permissible statement, and a point of view intelligible and not uninteresting, for it might place the church in front of the merely textual revelation—the Bible. The Bible would become the literary representation of the revelation, its coarse and defective transcription in words, but the church would be, so to speak, its biogenetic offspring, hence its embodiment.

Let us concede the point, and see whether we have reason to think that the church satisfies our requirement, so far as to enable us to quiet our importunity for a new revelation.

Again Where is the Church? or as we might put it Which is the Church? This question need no longer puzzle us perhaps, as we are going to submit it to an historical test, inasmuch as the contention, allowed above, rests in the historical conjunction of Church and Revelation. The Roman Catholic church has priority, has the historic mark of bodily relationship to the Christian revelation, and through it to the Hebrew revelation, which is possessed by none other. That is certainly clear, unspeakably clear, especially as the line of thought we are now following, involves what might be called, a *somatic* continuation of the Christ. It is also just as clear that in its historical experience the Roman church has developed a lot of dogma and articles of faith, which appeared long subsequent to its beginnings, and are unmistakably additions, assumptions,

and merely theological excrescences; though for its purposes immensely useful.

But these corruptions, if one cares to call them such, in no sense abridge its possible authoritative utterance on the simple question; Is there a God? and is there a Future Life? Now the answer of the church—of the Roman Catholic Church—to these interrogations is clear enough, and loud enough, but is it adequate? To make it adequate the church must show credentials of authority, as a revelation does: it must show supernatural power. It is a shallow and unthinking commentary—often indeed united to very winning ideals and expressed in a seductive phraseology—that we need no miraculous or supernatural accompaniments to a revelation, and only noble thoughts, lofty ambitions, pure motives, and an infallible conduct. Rubbish, positive rubbish, it has often been beautifully expressed, as when Mr. Benson writes, "the teaching of the Gospel and the teaching of Plato were alike deeply idealistic. They both depended upon the simple idea that men could conceive of themselves as better than they actually were, and upon the fact that such a conception is the strongest motive force in the world in the direction of self-improvement. The mystery of conversion is nothing more than the conscious apprehension of the fact that one's life is meant to be noble and beautiful, and that one has the power to make it nobler and more beautiful than it is;" all of which is deliquescent nonsense, and utterly at war with what any hard headed man of the world knows to be the truth of things.

Place a so-called revelation on the everyday level of

human experience and dress it in brilliant apothegms and angelic sentiments and it will have about as much force, considered as a revelation, as a new, elegant, and impeccable system of sanitary plumbing—and further, it ought to have no more. But let the promulgator of commonplaces or even half truths or exploded fictions or even reprehensible fancies, flash in the eye of gaping admirers an inexplicable and stupendous phenomenon, defying plausibility and over-riding possibility, and his doctrine is at once lifted, hitched up into an atmosphere of transfigured and illimitable power. And rightly so. It requires no very minute analysis to prove this.

A revelation is itself the reciprocal of our supreme ignorance as to the meaning of life and its consequences, its sources, its control. Hence when it comes, if it comes at all, it comes with the attributes of the realms outside of human experience, and assures us of its origin by its supercession over human power and human knowledge. It may have, must have, if it is a revelation at all, in a real sense and worthy of attention, moral and spiritual qualities, unless it comes from the devil, and supports a diabolical glory of lusts, lies, and deceits.

But at any rate it must bear the traits of an invulnerable omnipotence, omniscience, and give testimony to its inscrutable, incalculable, and infallible essence. And it can only do so by bringing with it the phenomena of supernatural power.

If we are going to trust the church—the Roman Catholic church—to allay our doubts, and instill

certainty and assurance into our souls, has this church the marks of a supernatural dispensation, does it seem to perpetuate the revelation or any revelation by an authoritative exhibition of control over natural forces, or the unique possession of any mandatory skill and supremacy over natural processes, which meets the requisitions of a definition of miracles given by us elsewhere (The World as Intention), viz. "a creative act involving a supernatural process, which is a demonstration of law being a manifestation of the property of God-creativeness." Now it is certainly true that this same church with the veritable genius it exhibits for theological consistency shows its appreciation of this logical expectation and claims, and always has claimed, the *miraculous* power, but it is far from clear that it either had, or today has the power in such measure or in any measure sufficient to make its claims good, or to satisfy our fastidious and exacting demands. The matter furnishes grounds for a peculiar study.

In dealing with supernatural efficiencies, events, or claims, it is obvious that no exact rules can be prescribed for their occurrence, and working blindly in a field of hypothetical wonders we might err on the side of sceptical severity as easily as on that of credulous acquiescence; we might as quickly reject all evidence as accept all, and we might naturally fail to give the right weight to any. If supernatural transactions appear unevenly, now crowded together and now separated by long intervals it is possible to believe that this strange gift or power varies with conditions,

persons, and needs, or that there were records kept at one time more carefully than at another, or, accepting the hint of a scoffing indifference, that it paid better to have the miracles when they did occur, than when they did not occur.

Many preliminary considerations might be urged but in reality we are not so much in search of proof as to the residence of supernatural power in the church, as we are anxious to determine whether it resides there to such a degree as to make the church's utterance on the critical questions asked above, satisfactory and irrefragable, and whether, residing there, it makes itself distinctly felt. In discussing the revelations, it was not altogether that we felt that there had been no revelation, as that so much of it as was historically recorded, was beset with uncertainty and error, and that because of that demonstrable fact we felt our position, as claimants for another revelation, reasonably supported, reasonably fair, perhaps indeed so much more than fair as to become imperative. Similarly the church may present evidence of supernatural power, the historic assertion may be impeccable, but it may be seen through such a cloud of qualifying considerations as to quite lose its essential force *for us*. The laws of evidence should certainly be invoked, and yet such laws as applied to secular happenings might miss giving us a right conclusion in a supernatural event, which for occult reasons, would be apparent to one observer, and quite invisible to another at the same time and the same place; though as a matter of fact the church miracles as reported seem to be of so downright a material,

corporeal, objective forcefulness as to make such reservations unnecessary.

In another way the point might be settled: is there a quantitative force of evidence, does it appear that the church from its beginnings to the present, has been richly filled with the power, so that its whole pathway is marked, and conspicuous with these monuments to its transcendental authority? Or have there been a few sublime instances—like arc lights in the gloom of the commonplace—so well authenticated as to be beyond suspicion, and so serious or tremendous in their import as to convey to the church an unquestionable miraculous origin? Before clustering round our heads, or at our ears, more specifications or claims for sorts of miracles—and they might be made many—let us quote this remark of the Catholic writer, who perhaps more than any recent thinker on the subject has infused into the theme a somewhat philosophic thoughtfulness.

In a note attached to his *Apologia pro sua Vita* Cardinal Newman expresses this view; "Catholics believe that miracles happen in any age of the church, though not for the same purposes, in the same number, or with the same evidence, as in Apostolic times. The Apostles wrought them in evidence of their divine mission; and with this object they have been sometimes wrought by Evangelists of countries since, as even Protestants allow. Hence we hear of them in the history of St. Gregory in Pontus, and St. Martin in Gaul; and in their case, as in that of the Apostles, they were both numerous and clear. As they are granted to Evangelists, so are they granted, though in less measure

and evidence, to other holy men; and as holy men are not found equally at all times and in all places, therefore miracles are in some places and times more than in others. And since generally, they are granted to faith and prayer, therefore in a country in which faith and prayer abound, they will be more likely to occur, than where and when faith and prayer are not; so that their occurrence is irregular. And further, as prayer and faith obtain miracles, so still more commonly do they gain from above the ordinary interventions of Providence; and, as it is often very difficult to distinguish between a providence and a miracle, and there will be more providences than miracles, hence it will happen that many occurrences will be called miraculous, which, strictly speaking are not such, that is, not more than providential mercies, or what are sometimes called *grazie* or favours."

Now it may be known to the reader that Cardinal Newman, at least among Catholic writers, maintains that to treat the history "of the Catholic church without taking miracles into account is to profess to write the annals of a reign yet to be silent about the monarch —to overlook his personal character and professed principles, his indirect influence and immediate acts," that "miracles are the kind of facts proper to ecclesiastical history, just as instances of sagacity or daring, personal prowess or crime are the facts proper to secular history."

It is further a kind of theological or ecclesiastical, principle with Newman, that "since what happened once might happen again, a certain probability, at

least no kind of improbability was attached to the idea taken in itself, of miraculous intervention in later times, and miraculous accounts were to be regarded in connexion with the verisimilitude, scope, instrument, character, testimony and circumstances, with which they presented themselves to us: and, according to the final results of those various considerations, it was our duty to be sure, or to believe, or to opine, or to surmise, or to tolerate, or to reject, or to denounce."

It may be further known to the reader that Mr. Edwin Abbott has written a book entitled Philomythus —an antidote against credulity—in which with extreme industry, a very exacting analysis, and in a spirit apparently saturated with an unquestioning allegiance and love for the gospels, he has sharply confronted Cardinal Newman, and attacked his doctrine, "probability as the guide of life," with unswerving zeal.

The point we have reached, and the outlook offered by it, might not exactly interest either of these combatants—not Mr. Abbott certainly, for his faith springs to its object with the instinctive certitude of simply strong feeling "in the spiritual, the naturally spiritual experience of Christian souls and Christian societies"—though it might develop liens of attachment to his own position, for the great cardinal.

Mr. Abbott rejects the ecclesiastical miracles as unnecessary to faith. Cardinal Newman urges the proof of a number, and constructs a platform of attestation for the divine source of the church, by reason of their proven quality and occurrence. We sympathize with the Cardinal's design, though we can understand and

appreciate its critical demolition by Mr. Abbott. They both furnish us with material for our discussion, for of course, apart from the polemics of these antagonists, the fact, if it can be proven of miracles at all in the historic church, is a matter rather stringently related to life and faith, and especially so to us when, as leaving revelation, unconvinced, or, more truthfully, not fundamentally satisfied, we are scanning the horizon for new succour.

There is no dearth of recorded miracles in the annals of the church, and there are many phenomena of a similar character, or which might be placed in the same category, in the denominations, the churches outside of the Catholic communion. In turning over the pages of Brewer's Dictionary of Miracles, it is quite astounding to note the number and variety of these interesting stories, and it is just as plain as anything that the most of them are fictitious or exaggerated reports in which a certain fabulous beauty and romantic invention, like that of a fairy tale, prevail, and prevail with a distinctly discrediting effect.

Many of them are very pretty, some of them unpleasant, many of them preposterous, and almost all conceived in a vein of enduring and delighted wonder. It has often, I believe, been pointed out that the miracles of the ages succeeding the establishment of Christianity, as recorded in the New Testament, are of an incomparably poorer type, and deficient in that simple and comporting dignity of relation and meaning, which pertains to the miracles of the Gospels, though perhaps even here there is a slight fallacy of sentiment,

the inevitable injection of that bias of veneration which so creditably surrounds the valued treasury of our old religious faiths.

Now Dr. Brewer has given a kind of systematization to his collection of miracles by separating it into groups, each one of which presents a scriptural type, that is a miracle, or a text, or a dogma, from the Bible, forms a pattern for the secular miracles of the historic period. Thus Brewer explains his sections; in the first "some miracle of the Bible is taken as a text, and then from the various hagiographies are quoted corresponding examples; thus as Elisha's axe was made to float on water, so St. Benedict makes an axe-head, which has fallen into a lake rise to the surface and become firmly fixed into its haft again;" in the second section "Scripture texts are shown expanded into illustrative incidents as when we read, 'thou wilt not suffer thy holy one to see corruption,' the accommodating annalist tells his readers of the bodies of saints which do not decay;" the third section exemplifies the Roman Catholic dogmas; thus the value of Holy Water is shown by the success attending St. Achard's use of it, who "used to go over his abbey every night, when the inmates had retired to their cells, and visit the dormitories with cross and holy water to drive away evil spirits, which often hid themselves in these places to scare the sleepers in their sleep."

The perusal of a very few of these show their legendary and insubstantial character. They are rescripts of country tales, or the barefaced mongered inventions of ecclesiastical peddlers. They cannot

be true, though no opportunity is prepared in Brewer for their evidential support or examination. As Dr. Brewer says, "the language of the church added no little to the same husbandry. Every sin, every heresy, every doubt was believed to be the work of some demon. Sickness was produced by the indwelling of the same malignant spirits; so were storms and tempests, floods and fires, earthquakes and gales. Hence to cure a sickness was, in many cases, synonymous with casting out a devil; to break down a heathen altar was to dislodge a demon; to drain a flood was to overcome the evil one; and to combat a storm was to wage war with Satan." A church with such an arsenal of trophies from the realms of the Supernatural can scarcely be regarded with much interest in these illuminated and fair days. The authorities for these amazing tales are, the *Acta Sanctorum*, *Les Petits Gollandistes*, a vast compilation of Mgr. Guerin, and the *Lives of the Saints*, by Edward Kinesman; and the illimitable maze of wonders has been indubitably treated with absolute impartiality, no sanction being asked for anything except its former currency.

The miracles thus collected, are most numerous, and especially crowd the centuries in which superstition flourished, and when science, culture, and knowledge maintained a feeble life, at a time when faith was as natural as breathing, and credulity in the masses was only less healthy and aspiring than the love of food and gaming. Here are a few samples of the least edifying and most strange, and purely stupid miracles; "St. Aphrodisius, bishop of Beziers, met with great success

in his preaching, and converted many from idolatry to the Christian faith: but one day a number of pagans set upon him, and after tossing him about from one to another, finished their sport by cutting off his head. St. Aphrodisius raising himself up, took his head between his hands, and walking through the midst of the crowd carried it to a certain chapel beyond the town, and buried it there." Again "Gelgês was the daughter of Aedfind, a king of Ireland, then divided into six kingdoms: and married clandestinely prince Fintan, son of Finloga, king of Momonia, one of the six kingdoms. From this union sprang Fursy, afterwards canonized. Aedfind, perceiving that his daughter was about to give birth to a child, and learning by inquiry that its father was a Christian, was so enraged, that he ordered Gelgês at once to be burnt to death, and went himself to see the sentence carried out. As Gelgês was led away to execution, the child in the womb reproved its cruel grandfather with a loud voice and intelligible words"; and lastly, and by way of a climax, short and overwhelming, "on one occasion, we are told, the Venerable Bede preached to a heap of stones, thinking himself in a church; and the stones were so affected by his eloquence that they exclaimed, 'Amen Venerable Bede' " which last, with its fairy glamour, is not displeasing, but insufferable rubbish for serious consideration.

Cardinal Newman has been at some pains to go over, apparently with an affectionate interest, a large supply of the Christian miracles, and has selected from the difficult mass those which in his opinion are so well

accredited as to deserve the acceptance of Christians. He admits that the scriptural miracles are very different from the ecclesiastical miracles, and Mr. Abbott is not slow to indicate that the Cardinal arguing from the fact that God performed the former, to the probability that God will perform the latter, does in effect argue thus, "that because God once did something for a special purpose, therefore it is quite likely that He will hereafter do something quite different, and for no purpose, or at all events for no discernible purpose"; a statement which would certainly do injustice to our point of view, as the fact of miracles, of any sort if abundantly proven, and absolutely incontrovertible, would help a little, at least in determining for us how far we felt prescribed to accept the church's answer to the questions we have been asking.

It is indeed unnecessary to dwell upon Mr. Abbott's *parti pris* as objecting to these ecclesiastical miracles, upon grounds of exceptions to Newman's arguments for their partial acceptance, for a general toleration of them, and his plea for a certain sort of friendly receptivity for them. An argumentative view of the question is quite outside of the purpose of this book. We are looking for the credentials of the church, and at this moment, supposing the church supercedes revelation, are, as it were, listening for its certain accents upon the questions we wish answered. Therefore as we know its opinion or, more affirmatively, its assertions, we are again diligently in quest for the proofs of its divine powers. Do these miracles furnish them? Very imperfectly we think; so imperfectly that they could not

be considered as operative tests for the church's divinely assigned mission to promulgate any views, or answer any questions with certainty.

Now Cardinal Newman has chosen out of the thousands of miracles which he has looked into, a crucial or solvent few, which have both a subjective and objective character, that is they represent interpositions in favor of the church from outside, and they also illustrate the sovereignty over nature of its saints within it. It may be as well to attend to these. A very special and well known one is the miracle of the Thundering Legion, by which it happened that a Roman army under the emperor Marcus Aurelius was face to face with the enemy, and about to perish with thirst, when one of the soldiers—a Christian—prayed for water and rain fell accompanied by such thunder and lightning as to terrify and rout the enemy. The emperor admitted the efficacy of the petition, and the legion was ever afterwards called the Thundering Legion. Upon this Newman remarks in his Essay on Ecclesiastical Miracles: "under these circumstances I do not see what remains to be proved. Here is an army in extreme jeopardy, with Christians in it; the enemy is destroyed, and they are delivered. And Apollinaris, Tertullian, and Eusebius, attest that these Christians in the army prayed, and that the deliverance was felt at the time to be an answer to their prayers; what remains but to accept their statement?"

But other writers, in the very next breath are upon us with denials and disproof and scorn. We are told that Eusebius simply "reports" this event, that the

pagan writers ascribe to it a different interpretation, and one which a modern would naturally ascribe also, that Tertullian speaking of the letter of the "wise and judicious emperor Marcus Aurelius," according to Bishop Lightfoot, "had no direct and personal knowledge of any such letter," and that, though "heathen historians, medals still extant, and the column which bears the name of Antoninus at Rome, concur with Christian tradition in commemorating the extraordinary deliverance of the Roman army, during the war with the German nations, from a situation of the utmost peril and difficulty" (Milman), that no other Father mentions this miracle, and that Newman himself concludes that the thunderstorm occurred, *but* "whether through miracle or not we cannot say for certain but more probably not through miracle, in the philosophical sense of the word." Considering that we already postulate doubt as to the church's knowledge, such a miracle as this would scarcely dispel it.

Then there is the famous incident of the appearance of a cross to Constantine, viz. that Constantine on his march, saw together with his whole army, a luminous Cross in the sky above the mid-day sun, with the inscription, *In this conquer:* and that in the ensuing night, he had a dream in which "our Lord appeared with the Cross, and directed him to frame a standard like it as a means of victory in his contest with Maxentius." But here again we are not allowed any implicit confidence. Eusebius mentions the miracle doubtfully and Milman assures us that "the silence, not only of all contemporary history (the legend of Artemius,

abandoned even by Tillemont, does not deserve the name), but of Eusebius himself, in his Ecclesiastical History, gives a most dangerous advantage to those who altogether reject the story," and he adds "the great difficulty which encumbers the theory which resolves it into a solar halo, or some natural phenomenon is the legend, *en touto nika*, which no optical illusion can well explain, if it be taken literally. The only rational theory is to suppose that this was the inference drawn by the mind of Constantine, and embodied in these words; which being inscribed on the *labarum*, or on the arms of any other public monument, as commemorative of the event, gradually grew into an inseparable part of the original vision."

The third of Dr. Newman's miracles which has received an especial stamp of verisimilitude is the Fiery Eruption on Julian's attempt to rebuild the Temple, when "the work was abandoned; and the Christians of later ages could appeal to the remains of the shattered works and unfinished excavations, as the unanswerable sign of the Divine wrath against their adversaries, as the public and miraculous declaration of God in favour of their insulted religion." (Milman.) "The main fact" says Milman "is indisputable, that, as they dug down to the foundations, terrific explosions took place; what seemed balls of fire burst forth; the works were shattered to pieces; clouds of smoke and dust enveloped the whole in darkness, broken only by the wild and fitful glare of the flames. Again the work was renewed by the obstinate zeal of the Jews; and again they were repelled by this unseen and irresistible power, till they

cast away their implements and abandoned the work in humiliation and despair."

One trouble about this event interpreted as a miracle is that it is overdone in the records, although it seems to be admitted that there is considerable testimony to its actual occurrence in some form. It is one of those miracles of terror (if miracle at all) when, as Milman observes, "the passion of fear so completely unhinges and disorders the mind, as to deprive it of all trustworthy power of observation or discrimination." We are told that "all the tools of the workmen were melted down; there was an earthquake; the new excavation was filled up; the old buildings in the neighborhood were thrown down; numbers of Jews were buried in the ruins; the fire met those who fled to a church, at the door, and forced them back with the loss either of life or their extremities; the fiery mass, says another, ranged up and down the street for hours." Guizot has not been unwilling to ascribe the overthrow of Julian's efforts to the explosions of the firedamps, the occluded gases in the immense excavations in the mountain, and the genius of Gibbon glosses over the fact with this calm irony; "a philosopher may still require the original evidence of impartial and intelligent spectators. At this important crisis, any singular accident of nature would assume the appearance and produce the effects of a real prodigy. This glorious deliverance would be speedily improved and magnified by the pious art of the clergy of Jerusalem, and the active credulity of the Christian world; and at the distance of twenty years, a Roman historian careless of theological disputes, might adorn his work with the specious and splendid miracle."

Besides the miracles mentioned, and which might be called objective there are in Newman's catalogue of particular miracles the following subjective ones, or those which originated in the supernatural powers or privileges of individuals in the church; viz. the Change of water into oil by St. Narcissus; the Change of the course of the River Lycus by St. Gregory; the Death of Arius; the Recovery of the blind man at Milan; the Power of speech continued to the African Confessors when deprived of their tongues; the Miraculous effects of the Oil of St. Walburga. In every case the force of the event *qua* miracle is qualified by objections, by suspicion, and by reasonable doubt. Newman abandons the first, the second seems to be deficient in proof, the third also, the fourth a possible faith cure, and at any rate lacking completeness i. e. the blind man was not very much helped, the fifth equivocal as cases of tongueless persons speaking are on record, the sixth apparently weakened by unmethodical and dilapidated evidence (Vide Kingsley), though, judging from the letter of the Rev. Corbinian Wandinger (Appendix to *Apologia pro Vita Sua*) there is noticeable testimony of some kind of mysteriousness in the properties as in the development of this oil. The oil might have been mineral and utterly unrelated to the bones of the saint as a source of supply.

Now there is not here in these miracles and in the vast numbers which Brewer's and others' industry have gathered together, the sort of authoritative evidence as to the unimpeachable value of the other opinions of the church, or let us say its dogmas, its creed, and even the

broadest outlines of its faith, which means the existence of God and the certainty of a Future Life. They and other considerations stand for something, we admit it, to ourselves, but there is still left highly insistent and active the impetuous wish to know more, and it is a wish which is not unsustained and unwarranted; thousands share it, and the church itself should not shrink from allying itself to the effort to constrain God to a clearer and modern utterance.

If we turn from these ancient days over which as over the years of the Revelation hangs a peculiar veil of unreality, at least to us in this modern moment, with its hilarious eagerness and its dazzling light of science, and look for the same signs of her consecration and power in the church of Rome we find none impressive or sublime. Relics are said to be effecting cures, apparitions happen here and there, but it is all tedious and doubtful, and we ask again for some sudden glow, some torrent of illumination that will dispel our torpor and repugnance.

The church is useful, most useful, but is it anything else? Is it *divine*, does its hand rest in God's, are its lips speaking as His oracles, can it defy the process of nature, does a light of other worlds shine on its altars, and do its strange and isolated priests vouchsafe—with power to deny—the mystery of eternal life? We Protestants look at it with a trembling wonder. It is so old and hoary, it has been so wicked, its culture is so unimaginable and exclusive, so portentous and so mechanical, so zealous and so designing, its roots spring from such a marvellous soil, its fruitage is so various

and fantastic, and it butts with such invincible and dull obstinacy against the truth of facts and reasons. Today it seems a little pinched and wrinkled, and its voice has a cracked and uneasy complaining note in it, and we hardly think of it anymore as holding the gift of prophecy and of tongues; and yet it gleams with a kind of spent fascination. It seems very much at war with our day—and why? Is our day so bad, that it should denounce or quarrel with it? Is it not the best of days that ever were? We have lost faith but why? Knowledge has shaken, as with the hand of a giant old fabrics and structures, and the City of God on earth is falling about our ears, and because of that we ask for the descent, in some new form, of that same City; or else indeed in the old form, transfigured, from the skies.

It is not that the revelation does not count, or that the church does not count, but both need replacement or reassertion in modern terms, somehow, as to these two things God and Another Life. We are bewildered —the natural world and every-day life adds each day, and month, and year, a tempest of miseries, and wonders, and abominations, which nothing fully or partially explains. The very atmosphere, the air we breathe, of modern thought and living, engenders aversion to church and revelation. Can we help it? If we are striving hard to drink the spiritual draught offered by the church, if we struggle to decipher the lineaments of divinity in revelation, and Science and wisdom pluck the cup from our lips, or with new pictures turn away our gaze, are we to blame?

Anon something called Pragmatism arises with

rustling robes and swimming utterances, and in her own dissolute way, with spendthrift ease bids us watch our fancied needs, and believe our fancies. Is this right? Let God speak, let a new light shine from the globed heavens, and again let the Son of God step upon the earth, and again hold the rebuked world stunned and quiet and believing. We do not ask for the completion of knowledge, nor that all or even much be explained. Those two things only; God and Immortality. We are willing to pray for this new answer. We have given the plan. Will it work, or shall there still continue to be silence—and must we in that silence—albeit the church keeps up her prayers and her preaching, and the page of revelation is printed and printed and printed again for the many millionth time—live and move and have our being? And again as regards the Church and the Bible we are constrained to quote from the pious and learned Auguste Sabatier; "it needed only to narrate the long and tempestuous elaboration of the Catholic and Protestant dogmas of authority to show them both crumbling away under the triple protest of History, the reason, and the Christian consciousness. The first rests on a political, the second on a literary fiction. Both are the fruit of an exaggerated and misunderstood craving for authority, and a formal and abstract logic, deducing from an *a priori* postulate, not that which is, but that which ought to be. A diplomatic and utilitarian argument is at the basis of all these systems of authority. The tribunal is declared infallible, not because it actually is such, but because there is need that it should be such."

And as to the Church, whose credentials for our assurance that it is a commissioned guide in these questions we have been examining, the same thoughtful writer observes; "is it possible for a critical mind to lend greater faith to the more recent mythology with which the papacy has veiled its origin? Have its institution by Christ and the chain of apostolical succession more reality than the genealogy by which the blood of Aeneas was traced in the family of the Caesars? Such poetic garlands hung on the front of the engine which moves the train adorn it to the eyes and imagination, but they do not make the steam which from within sets it in motion, nor are they supposed to do so. A few more revolutions of the wheel towards the unknown future, and the face of the world will be renewed. The Catholic form of the Church had its history, its greatness, its efficacy, in the past. Other forms are being secretly prepared which will unfold in their turn, to respond to new needs, and render to future ages services no less necessary."

And will not the church and all Christians in their several ways help us? They know the practice of prayer, if there are means of intercession they know them, they have the graces of interposition, of supplication, they surely are well regarded in the courts of the Most High and the emotional volume of desire should rise with huge compulsion from their lips and break into resonant waves of entreaty in the Palace of the King. They have guarded the ark of the covenant, they minister at its portals with acceptance, their lamps are lit, and they have kept the shew-bread untainted, and

their priests have eaten it in the sanctuary, according to the law; let them enlist and help us, indeed without them we can do nothing. Are they not willing, are they afraid? They should be willing for a new word from God means their own permanent triumph, and a sudden reinforcement of religion throughout the world, the confusion of atheism, and the rout of irreverence, parley and delay.

Are they afraid? It is not, by them, feared, to ask for health, and sustenance, and happiness, and improvement, and forgiveness, and they do not hesitate to pray for unbelievers and the faithless, and "those who despitefully use us"; shall it be harmful to pray for more light and with it the conviction of those who are now unconvinced? Would they not welcome this new light themselves? Is it construed by them as intrusion and an impertinence to anticipate the intentions of God in this manner, as it were, forcing his hand? There are some considerations which should dissipate this alarm, should make it impossible. And they arise from the nature of a revelation *per se*.

A revelation is conditioned, we think, by the need and desire of men (see Prolegomena; The World as Intention), there may be monitions of wisdom in the divine mind which establish it, but it comes from immanent desires and needs for it among men. What else? A revelation as we would conceive it, is not a plaything of God, an indulgence for the divine wit or intellect, but a response initiated in the precarious attitude of men towards some great reality, which reality with Christians is called Salvation. Now what we are asking for is not

a complete revelation so far as we might assume the last would be, and which elsewhere (The World as Intention) we ventured to regard as "an actual rescue to perishing nations disappearing in the wreck of physical ruin," but it is a help, which from innumerable points of view seems, if religion is worth considering at all, one of the most desirable and needful things we can conceive of.

We will drop the word revelation and call what we are after information though it would bear the character of a minor or incidental revelation; it would have respect for the need and the desire of men. Well this places it on a simple ground, it coordinates it with the daily things we all ask for, making it a little grander and more important. But intensely expectant as we are that this request should be answered, we would not be willing to be patient with silence, as we are, when, asking for health or happiness, we reconcile ourselves to ill health and sorrow. It passes beyond the implications of the individual, it seriously concerns the future of civilization, the methods of society in national life, the rules of conduct perhaps, the relations of the superior nations to the inferior, the organization of society, and many other matters. (See Chapter IX, The Alternative.)

And if there is no answer to our Plan inaugurated on a world wide scale, then, we should feel ourselves driven rather irresistibly to the conclusion, that *there is no God*, and *no Future Life*, and this is a very dreadful conclusion indeed, one we shudder to think of, one which accepted would instantly change the moral,

intellectual and emotional face of the earth. Here is room for thought.

There is a supplementary note of explanation to be added to this chapter. It refers to our attitude of attention in the Chapter on the Plan to the recorded work of martyrs and saints, as prescribing somewhat the line of action we should advise in this Great Prayer, this Sublime Invocation, which would seem to presuppose our belief in these records, which belief would contrast with our unbelief in similar things in this chapter.

The explanation and reconcilement is not difficult and saves consistency. In the Plan we had reference to the only discoverable means of carrying on our experiment, in this chapter we discuss the insufficiency of both revelation and the miracles of the church, to give us the impregnable evidence of those things we are anxious to determine. In the Plan we act on the Christian basis of "ask and ye shall receive; knock and it will be opened." In the Plan we were relatively anxious about means and ways, and saw but one method, a method conceived, as the contention underlying this whole book is conceived, on the Christian basis, for prosecuting the Plan, a *method of prayer*. In this chapter where we have for an instant turned to the miracles of the church for her credentials, and which have not been convincing—to the extent of overcoming our doubts—we were occupied in simply establishing the reasonableness of our grounds for asking for a new communication from God.

This dual position might seem equivocal, because we

are, we confess placed in a difficult relation, as looking askance in one place upon the assertions of Christianity with reference to the questions we ask, and yet invocating in another place Christianity's help in making a hypothetical appeal to get a new answer to the same questions.

But the ambiguity is not fatal. Speaking for an enormous number of thinkers, and living men and women today, thousands of them nominally contained in the Christian churches, who would welcome a clearer light, speaking indeed for all Christians, none of whom could disparage or discourage an honest search for more knowledge we turn to Christianity—whose assertion that there is a God and A Future Life is the sole source for the belief at all in a historical sense—and we ask Christianity, availing itself of its experience and influence, its ingrained habits of devotion, to ask God, for us, for the whole world, for themselves, to speak again.

Is this wrong or censurable? The foregoing pages contain the brief of our plea for consideration. Surely there is nothing to fear, there is everything to hope. The failure of the Plan might not affect the Christian believer an iota, or stir him from his belief by a hair's-breadth, though it might urge the thousands who, by such a Plan, concede the Christian's standpoint as possible, and ask him to prove it (not in a spirit of disputation, or distrust, or cynicism, or scorn, or superiority, or faithlessness, but with affection, and sympathy and reverence)—it might urge them to relegislate the government, and reconstruct the conduct of the world. For while a silent God is not the same thing as

no God, his silence would seem to isolate us, and permit us, in a spirit of wholesale scientific regeneration and reform, to alter the economies of this earth.

NOTE—It is altogether likely that the Funks and Hyslops and Duffs and Allens would say to this extreme urgency of ours, "Spiritualism answers one of your questions: there is another life." Great God! is this stifling turpitude to be the answer, are these bewitched fools to serve us "from on High," must we be thrust into the company of ghosts and non-entities, stammering night mares and the foul smelling and stained reincarnations of stool pigeons and vulgar horse play? Are these gasping and gibbering money makers, with their rigma-roles, their farce, and their catch penny shades, candles, and cabinets to replace the voice of Him who "created the heavens and the earth"? "Surely we would speak with the Almighty, and we desire to reason with God." What shameless insolence to ask us to look for divine knowledge in the clap-trap shops and amid the slime and junk of diseased minds, anaemic men, fat harpagons, and screaming witches! This whole spiritualistic business is stained with lies and, even if inexplicable, is about as interesting or ennobling and horrible, or it is a deceit. (See Hereward Carrington. The Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism.)

CHAPTER VIII

The Answer

It is hard to frame a conception, endurable and sensible, of the method of revelation. In trying to do so we seem suddenly to be flung against a wall of obdurate doubts. As long as we maintain a material conception of the world, as long as the universe remains substantial; where "every globe has been weighed and poised, every orbit has been measured and bent to its beautiful form, where all is changing, but the laws fixed by the wisdom of God, though they permit the rocking to and fro of the system, never introduce disorder, or lead to destruction, where all is perfect and harmonious, and the music of the spheres that burn and roll around our sun is echoed by that of ten millions of moving worlds, that sing and shine around the bright suns that reign above" (Mitchell), and where all this is conceived in terms of matter and force, how precisely does God live in it or speak to it, how can we objectify God to an infinite universe, or localize Him at any point in it, or out of it?

Is He a web disseminated through it, an *energumen* at its centre, or an enclosing veil within which it is established? These terms are fraught with absurdity, for in no sense can God be thought of as a web, or a demon or a veil. He can be thought of as a spirit, and yet a spirit instantaneously present at all parts of an infinite

universe bewilders one with its preposterous incomprehensibility, and begets, so long as we retain a physical conception of the universe, a host of logical difficulties: for if God as a spirit is at every point of the universe, he is there as a *person*, and hence he becomes to us the utterly insupportable idea of an infinitude of individuals or if he is one person he must be undergoing an incessant and an incredible transition from point to point within it to be intelligently cognizant of it throughout, or if he is located where is the location, and how if the world is material, does he sensibly entertain its furthest and innermost limits, and its changing detail at every part, except as an inscrutable polyphase receiver recording an infinite number and kind of vibrations?

Granting the universe is not infinite, and there have been adduced reasons for believing in a time edge to the planetary swarm, then if God is outside of it, watching it, contemplating it, and—if the Christian hypothesis stands—directing it, is he on one side of it more than another, or does he become a circumferential sphere of something wrapped round the universe, and, by some kind of tentacular apposition feeling it at every part?

One's mind swims at these thoughts, one's spirit is revolted at these phrases, we become quickly involved in impertinences and delusions and, rebuffed by a maze of circumlocution, refuse to think at all. But if we turn to some form of idealism, interpret the universe in terms of mind, reduce matter itself to a phase of mind, transform a spatial infinitude to an infinite thought, and insert in the microcosm of an idea a world of form and action, groping through schemes of mental projec-

tion and schemes of mental ordination, wherein the Universe is God's thinking and His thought, we reach residual data that seem to make a revelation credible and possible, for God—in a way—becomes conceivable.

Whatever matter is—and personally we do not concede its stubborn objectivity can be annihilated—yet on some basis of thought we can get a supportable theory of God's cognition of us, interest in us, His creative relation to the universe, and an understandable interaction between him and ourselves, whereby revelation becomes possible. Such a revelation might come to us strictly couched or conducted on mental lines, or it might, as revelations in the past, assume objective reality and bring to our senses a retinue of marvellous and revealing phenomena.

Our curiosity dwells with child-like interest on the possibilities of such manifestations, and we refuse to restrain the picture-making zeal of our imagination.

Our plan has been inaugurated, the world has consented to the vast experiment, the year of preparation, the year of supplication passes, and the mere formal observation has been completed. Enthusiasm and devotion, have distinguished the continuous service, and a psychic contagion has infected great multitudes with a common fervor, while from all the armories of faith the weapons of attack upon the threshold and power of Heaven, have been concentrated in a stupendous exercise of spiritual coercion. The world awaits an answer.

An answer comes. It might come in many ways. As a celestial glory—a light at night covering the skies

and blotting out all the stars, burning ceaselessly for days—one broad lambent cap of fire. This would possess invaluable features of strange beauty, and would become a spectacle as big as the earth itself. A revelation must be fashioned to meet mental receptivities, and grades of revelation can be sorted out, as their mechanism is calculated to raise wonder or sensuous delight, instill fear, or awaken loyalty and love, or satisfy reason. This nocturnal splendor would surely be classed as a wonder. Its aesthetic features would be radiantly grand; for it might wax and wane and develop into prodigious auroral magnificences, like those that travelers tell of, when quivering rays of pure white run across the sky, when long golden draperies float above the head of the spectator, and take a thousand folds and undulations as if agitated by the wind, when the sky looks like a cupola of fire: the blue, the green, the yellow, the red and the white vibrating in the palpitating rays of the aurora, and all this, in its known terrestial magnitude, greatly enlarged with insufferable splendor, as if God, for his advertisement, seized the powers of the earth and multiplied them.

Or it might be some *magnified* movement in the skies like that described by Dall in Alaska in 1867, when "the light approached with the wind at about half the pace of the wind in a cloud-like shape or condition, not far from the surface of the earth; and the form of this luminous cloud was in successive waves or ripples and resembled the rings of smoke rising from a pipe, one within another, gradually expanding; with the inner rings more intense than the outer ones, and the light

more intense in some parts of the rings than in others; and advancing as the ripples do when a stone is thrown into still water, with the ripples compressed in an oval form."

Imagine the vault above us suddenly pulsating with these fleeing and approaching fabrics of light, so that the night became as day, and a palette of colors, spectral but intense, filmed the blazing firmament. Such a portent would also be congruous as expanding a natural phenomenon, and along the border line of legitimate occurrences and miraculous interventions remain instructively problematic.

The answer might be—as we are here lingering in the realm of physical announcements—a sudden inrush of comets, threading in sublime length the ebon skies, paling the planets, and inwoven with the constellations like lustrous belts of gold;

> They stood as signals to the land
> Each one a lovely light.

Or it might be aerial concourses of music, thickly imprisoned in the air, so that the earth might take in "strains that might create a soul under the ribs of death"; it might be clothed in terrible signs that revoked the law of nature, the darkened day, the eclipsed sun, the trembling earth and all such possible signs of Supernature challenging attention by their untoward contradiction of formal sequence in the order of nature.

In these manifestations the lowest appeal to sense is made, though made with a grandiose and scenic strangeness that could only be regarded with impartial astonishment. And such an answer has complete justifica-

tion in our quick poetic and dramatic response to wonders and improvised beauty. These anticipations may be read with amusement and the smile of conscious superiority, but it requires no vacillating opinion for most of us to know how searching and stupendous this bare material marvellousness would prove in its effect on our minds and emotions, and how the most hardened intellectualism would throw down its syllogisms and pull off its mantle of scorn before these mysteries of some sort of instantaneous creation.

Or let the answer be a message of mercy; the sick might suddenly repell attendance and arise from their beds restored, missioners of seraphic power might walk in the midst of the suffering spots of the earth, and bring balm and contentment, healings and changed hearts, renewed loves might follow their ministrations, and broken fellowships be reunited, and the shattered harmonies of life be gathered together again in song; as

> "Silent rushes the swift Lord
> Through ruined systems still restored,
> Broad sowing bleak and void to bless,
> Plants with worlds its wilderness:
> Waters with tears of ancient sorrow
> Apples of Eden ripe tomorrow.
> House and tenant go to ground
> Lost in God, in Godhead found."

The answer might come in many mystical and strangely convincing ways entering the hearts of men, and through some hidden and exquisite influence, as by an applied learning or insight or temperament winning conviction.

We are accustomed to associate with the idea of a revelation or any communication from the sources of spiritual grace, moral sentiments and religious enjoinders, framed in aphoristic and encouraging language, and we also naturally give to their physical accompaniments the expression of supernatural acts. For instance we do not willingly think of a revelation as a scientific enlightenment, as endued with the knowledge of physics, or chemistry or geology, or medicine.

But would it not be a wonderfully pleasing thing to have happen as an answer to our Great Prayer, that there arose a group or groups of minds who by the inspiration of genius conducted experiments, proposed and proved theories with regard to the character of matter, of mind, of our origins, and swiftly swung our attention from one achievement to another in all the wide round of science with such skill, eloquence, daring and certainty, that they might appear as God-sent messengers; that somehow there arose with these scientific seers, philosophers of affirmation and wisdom, who would, under the guise of inspired utterances or prophecies, assert God and the Future Life with confidence, and print before our eyes the future of this world, which in years would be realized, carrying thus a witness to their divine purpose? That in short there should come a ruffling of the surfaces of thought, and, as in the story of the Pool of Siloam the descending spirits should disturb the depths of the spirits within us so that we might wash and be healed of doubt and doubting.

This is on a higher plane of feeling and thought, and

it might be not unaccompanied with natural portents, so that the world would feel itself ushered into a new strange arena of happenings, flashing above, round and through it, with a consequent thorough drawing together of its populations. The message would be vast and inclusive; it might install a common faith, and aim, among all intelligences, whether Chinese, Indian, Mohammedan, or Christian, and by a miraculous metamorphosis transmute the slow and stumbling process of missionizing into a sudden realization.

Our language presupposes the truth of the Christian creed in so far as the answers we are describing have been brought about by the Christian procedure and on the Christian hypothesis—and the consequences we see would mean a Christian empire; it could not fail to mean an eventual fusion of the races and the reconstruction of civilization on some new common basis of tolerance, sobriety, sense and continence. It is obvious that the *answer* in these ways might take a long time to complete itself, if ever completed, but its beginning might be quick and unmistakable, and so whether its end was seen or no, we should have rest for our soul.

There is still another supreme possibility, one which doubtless occurs to the reader, and which we approach with infinite caution. According to Christian doctrine God has come to the earth; *He might come again.* Let us here withdraw presumptuous guesses, and curtail this revelry of fancies, turning our attention to the practical mental and moral consequences of the answer, viz., That there is a God; That there is a Future Life.

It is pretty evident that a conclusion of this sort

deeply realized, realized with certainty, would impart a peculiar throb and shock to actors and thinkers in this world. One cannot get away from the impression that the religious recrudescence which would follow might disastrously affect current activities, and pitch us all into a meditative scrutiny of ourselves, that might injuriously contract enterprise, and seriously damage literary and art production, and produce an average order of behaviour, fatal for the institutions of the police, the judiciary, and the newspapers. Therein is seen a reasonable excuse for our satisfaction, with things as they are. But that is paltry cynicism. Look at our changed relations.

We would find ourselves in a world created and governed by design. Its aberrations would not be the less, the multitude of its miscarriages none the less evident, its slow emergence from social disorder or injustice, as unpleasantly conspicuous, but how rapidly the forces of readjustment would assert themselves, with this reinforcement of certitude as to the world's ethical significance. Revelations in the past—the two commonly so called—have been sparks of flame, placed in an incombustible and water soaked wilderness. They have flickered, collapsed, started again, struggled, and though winning their way have been set in wholly hostile, envious, or refractory groups of circumstances.

Today, after two thousand years of concerted thinking and striving, with the modern methods of circulation, the unanimity in moral expression of the ruling states, the widely distributed culture, the amiable

acquiescence in schemes of improvement, the cosmopolitanism of good purposes, a philosophical altruism, sensibility and just motives in presidents, potentates, and sovereigns, what rapid propulsion would be given to new ideas of government, and new ideals of personal conduct. A lot of things might happen, and happen very quickly. It would seem almost inevitable that war would be given up, and its present armaments vanish.

A very considerable outpouring of religious fanaticism might be expected, but the occasion might be propitious also for uniting denominational Christendom into one church. Unworldliness might gain headway, and vanity and prodigality correspondingly shrink. It would distinctly usher in a new era, for whatever supernatural signs have been in the past, nothing even dimly similar could be imagined in them, to the ostentatious showing of God's hand before a world able to record and prove all it hears and sees, before in fact a strictly scientific culture.

Of course the manifestations might follow very humble or obscure lines, but unless detected as the testimony to God's existence such a method would fail in perspicuity, it would fail also in enlisting conviction. And yet—so prone may God be to use dishonored or despised instrumentalities in his work—we should watch sharply for such proofs. But just how strangely we feel the world would be affected, just how keenly we realize the tumult and deep convulsion that would ensue upon some miraculous demonstration of God's presence in the universe, just so we measure precisely the present

apathy or the present misgivings; not indeed that it is not clear that ordinary human activity, adventure and use would be impeded by a too embarrassing reference of every thing to God.

Such waves of social excitement, the many hued aspects of mania, mysticism, religious extravagance, reformation, piety, austerity, eloquence, prayer, song, devotion, would finally lapse and subside, but it would seem likely that this revelation would remain incontestable, that over it there could not gather the aspersion, denials, flattening explanations, or plausible impeachments which attacked and lamed—in a measure—the others: and indeed these others might thus escape further examination, and their moral and religious contents acquire new strength and real validity.

There need be no wild and hazardous guess that the earth's affairs would seem to be less tangled, less accidental, or less vexatious than at present, but human action and human thought, very largely, would be made hereafter relevant to this fact—God's existence. And what a relevancy that would be! The immediate results in some directions might resemble those violent excesses which attended the New Testament revelation, and be equally intolerable, strange and superstitious, as for instance the *eremitism* of the Nile valley.

There might be very disastrous upsets in business, in amusements, in art, in all the thousand and one tasks of daily life, and, as far as commercial chances went, God's announcement of Himself might mean bankruptcy and ruin. For there is no control possible to the whimsical excess and unctuous surrender of a religious

nature when its mental sections are weak or wanting. Yes; confusion worse confounded, but again what a relief! How suddenly would the gravity and eternal consequences of living reassert themselves, and with what jejune hopelessness would Atheism resume its protests and disapprovals.

God's declaration of Himself would mean also a future life, and before these two certainties, the civilized world might almost choose a voluntary extinction in a sublime suicide, through chastity and temperance. But such a result would prove only a momentary danger; the centuries would roll on, but to new ends. A new stamina would engross men, and knowledge and wisdom would reengage the problems of substance and idea, force and matter, but always related to the massive impression of God's imminence at every point and in every movement. A spiritualized fineness and firmness might become habitual, and with it perhaps, in shallow and harsh hearts persecution, intolerance, bigotry, and superstition. The hypocritical impertinence of sanctimonious humbugs would be in evidence, and in fact, from one point of view a revelation, a supernatural sign, feeding an idiocy inseparable from human nature, might seem quite undesirable. Religion in so many becomes so silly, so painstakingly disagreeable, that calm indifference to the whole question might be a more sensible or serviceable regimen for daily life than too great confidence in God's existence and in His interest in us. Still that is quite aside from our purpose to discuss; we do not even believe it.

The Plan contemplated nothing more than the asser-

tion of God's superintendency over, or His existence in the world without any supplementary advice as to His exact relations to the human society and the human individual, so that conditions continuing as they are, nations and statesmen, publicists and students of civics, philanthropy, and sociology, would still have their problems, and philosophy its enigmas. But with a difference. There would be a certain tacit assumption of the underlying essence, and cosmogonies and philosophies would hardly escape the helpful reference. It is difficult to conceive exactly how the redeveloped consciousness of God would act, how it would regenerate or change living. Thousands today act and live in this way doubtless, though without outwardly showing a trace of the fixity of their religious thought, and of course to thousands God is absolutely nonexistent, and to them God's reinstallment, as it were, might prove painful, unnecessary, and become quickly disregarded, if the events we have suggested as possible, came as a consequence, or seemed to come as a consequence, to the Plan's execution, the years about them would be sensibly swayed and influenced by them, but the rapid flight of half a century would dim their sensuous impressiveness, and leave them again exposed to skepticizing and repudiation. But such a movement of skepticism would be less plausible than formerly; as we have said (*ante*). It would maintain a very doubtful struggle.

There are considerations however which suggest that possibily radical rearrangement of society would ensue. It cannot truthfully be said that today human life

counts for much in many eyes, and that the contemplation of savages in the wilderness of the world, the horde of half supported workers in the countries of Europe suggests to them much else than expeditious expedients for eliminating both, which presupposes the conception that human life has only a commercial relation to itself, and that it must be so far discouraged as it interferes with the prosperity of the better kinds (and there can be no doubt as to grades of human life) of human life, or brings on a competition in employment in such better kinds as to mean degradation, industrial slavery, and individual hebetude. In other words human life has, in the eyes of a large and educated class, lost individual significance, but represents a product which must be constantly improved, and kept strictly proportioned in amount to the work required of it, to the sustenance it can win, and to a progressive standard of civil and domestic life.

Under a reconstituted attitude towards human life, authorized perhaps by the revelation or portents we have considered, some kind of readjustment might follow in states. It would become a paramount duty to provide a life for every child, and that optimistic view of the Catholic church which promotes marriage, and regards every birth as preordained and divinely permissive, might be generally entertained. There would certainly follow an injection of socialistic procedure in the city and state. We could anticipate more paternal control and perhaps the slow emergence of a Christian socialistic community, in whose train a great number of new social features would develop and a great number

of present day business phenomena disappear. The words of Prof. Rogers (History of Philosophy) applied to the aboriginal life might be applicable to this new mould of society formed under the sudden impetus of a flood of new designs and motives; "life is far more of a unity for primitive man than it is for us today. The social organization is no compound of warring and self-seeking individuals, but each man finds his life without question in the community life about him, and accepts the community ideals."

Probably all such developments would disappear, at a greater and greater distance from the revelation, and society in three or four hundred years would resume its individualistic facies, but they would be computable results at first. And yet they might not. Observe we have only postulated a *sign* from God, not a *mission*, and the absence of this last, the absence of a personal enthusiasm and personal message might leave to the sign its mystery, but would rob it of permanent effects because it did not bring with it a professed following of evangelists and scribes.

The really significant and important thing would be the involution of God as an indisputable and generative principle in philosophy and in science, and his reinstallation, above them and their work, to those who often find the burden of living almost intolerable, and its rewards delusive. That would indeed be worth while. It would give a new zest of living, and it would reanimate Christian homiletics, and so impart a lively efficacy to creeds, now getting dull and faded, and simply worn to tatters from repetition. It might sober

life a little, in places a good deal, but to those craving or claiming religious illumination it would break the daylight into rainbows.

The immediate effect of importing a virtual responsibility upon society for every one born within its limits would be to increase assistance to the unfortunately born, and probably greatly extend the protection of the state over the young. The view of Mr. De Forest, expressed but yesterday, would be endorsed and its implications heartily accepted. Mr. De Forest said; "twenty-five years ago we were ready to accept poverty as a permanent condition, and our efforts were mainly directed to making its ills less intolerable. Now we are ashamed of our craven lack of faith. Today we believe that most poverty is a curable disease. It is still true that the poor are always with us. So long as human nature is what it is there will always be those who are poor from causes internal to themselves, from disability, physical and mental, and all those weaknesses which range from carelessness to crime, but the great bulk of poverty, from adverse social conditions, from disease and vice need not always be with us."

This would naturally result from a conviction that God's manifestation meant a corroboration of the two preceding revelations, and in them each individual seems to secure an individual and purposeful destiny. This would be attended by ameliorations, transplantation of the crowded from the cities to the country, drastic repression of "white slavery," and easements in prisons; perhaps an absolute recognition of the claim, in the division of profits among servants, em-

ployees, etc. All such advanced ideals of social life are known today in the United States, the interesting thing to note would be their possible adoption in the barbarism of Europe. And then another speculative forecast, conceives the reception this revelation would be given among all non-Christian peoples, to what extent its influence might proselytize the world. The matter arrests attention, especially in view of M. Gabriel Tarde's remarkable reflections on the "Laws of Imitation." In this striking book, a little we think hurt by aphoristic smartness, and a too absolute application of the theory to all circumstances of social range and change, we are shown how idea and custom, philosophy or creed, and action spread by imitation, by that spontaneity with which identical beings do or think identical things, when through initiative an originator among them points the way, inaugurates the custom, or reveals the idea. "All resemblances" says Tarde "of social origin in society are the direct or indirect fruit of the various forms of imitation—custom imitation, or fashion imitation, sympathy imitation or obedience imitation, precept imitation, or education imitation, naive imitation, deliberate imitation, etc." "This fact" he says, "is apparent in our European societies, where the extraordinary progress of fashion in all its forms in dress, food, and housing, in wants and ideas, in institutions and arts, in making a single type of European based upon several hundreds of millions of examples."

But transferred to higher planes the law of imitation may work transformations which would be world wide,

and belong to the greatest processes conceivable of standardizing the whole world with a philosophical or religious homogeneity. There is no doubt at the same time about what Tarde calls "refraction," by which the incidence of the same idea in a mental medium different from that of its origin assumes a varying phase, as for instance, to use his illustration, Theocritus is refracted in Virgil, Menander in Terence, Plato in Cicero (not, we think, a good analogy) Euripides in Racine. Desire and belief are ultimate motives or motif forces in stimulating or realizing imitations, and in the subsidizing of mankind to a common state.

To quote Tarde again "Mankind, as well as the individual man, always moves in the direction of the greatest truth and power, of the greatest sum of conviction and confidence, in a word, of the greatest attainable belief and we may question whether this maximum can be reached through the development of discussion, competition, and criticism, or, inversely through their suppression, and through imitation of a single expanding, and at the same time compact thought or volition." Now Tarde in his attempt at a formulation of the Laws of Imitation has separated them into Logical and Extra-Logical, and of the Logical he says; "Logical causes operate whenever an individual prefers a given innovation to others because he thinks it is more useful or more true than others, that is, more in accord than they are with the aims or principles that have already found a place in his mind."

The processes of imitation are today working with extraordinary vigor towards the assimilation of a com-

mon doctrine and common practice. Success, physical, emotional, moral, and mental attaching to the ideas of Christian civilization, or to some higher aspect of that civilization, must bring its tenets or its practice more and more intensely within the focalized attention of other civilizations, and the logical causes for imitation, given above, will quickly act: they will enforce a substitution of the Christian culture for a culture hostile or different, they will overwhelmingly, when through intercourse and the rapidly increasing avenues or instruments of contact and communication peoples strike peoples harder and harder, blend the inhabitants of this spinning and tiny sphere into sociological and psychological conformity. And should such a great and glittering fact as the sign we now are considering, come in reality among men, how stupendously it might accelerate that imitation which we already perceive is gathering the nations and races of the earth to the standard of a Christian confession. For it is pointed out in the most interesting section of his book (the Extra-Logical Laws of Imitation) by M. Tarde, that the assumption of ideas, sentiments, precedes the copying of habit, practice, or etiquette; hence with a furtherance of the merely objective witnesses to its value, by a revealing act, the previous seeding of its interior superiority in the minds or hearts of alien cultures, would infinitely hasten the intellectual and sentimental fusion of the earth.

After all, the point gained would be the assertion of God's reality, possibly also the implication of another life, but all this rather as an argued result from the

signs or portents, than especially as any kind of verbal proclamation. Life would become expressive of responsibility, of supramundane connection, and the influx of scientific determinism would sensibly retreat. Such an interjection and adumbrant vision of Himself by God, does seem to grow increasingly imperative, if the present crisis of apostacy is to be successfully passed, for though this Plan as here outlined rests for its plausibility upon christian theorems yet, as is shown in the next chapter, we are sternly cognizant of mechanical developments in society and in government, which the future may bring and bring all the more quickly *if there is no corroborative accent from the assumed seats of divine revelation.*

CHAPTER IX

The Alternative

But suppose there is no sign, no answer, no revelation; just the same unchanged skies, remorseless retinue of seasons, succession of night and day, the flowage of phenomena known to us from childhood, and the iteration of death and birth, struggle and romance, daily duties, distracting pleasures, and hard work. What then? Shall the earth yet wait, and in the presence of an aggressive and fairly bewildering assault of doubt, flourishing its challenges under the leadership of learning and science still cling to its formularies, and, with unassuaged ardor still kneel and pray? If the provocations that seem to justify the Plan are as weighty as we assume, then it is not an illogical conclusion that either there is no God, or that He is silent, or that He does not care, and the mere mention of these alternatives must permanently asphyxiate faith and start thought on a new measure of speculation and practical government, into new roles of instrumentation and economy.

It would certainly mean that the inhabitants of the earth are to take their problems up, one by one, and settle them by themselves, unrelieved by the hope of divine interposition, and under the guidance of experience and reasoned out deductions. Could any thing be more legitimate? The issue of a physical dilemma

is presented to us in which no spiritual correctives are discernible. There are sickness, pauperism and crime all about us; there are large classes of "undesirable citizens," there are imperfect execution of good laws, wholesale opportunities for roguery and deceit, overcrowding of habitations, neglect of health, ruinous dissipation, moral restraint leading to misery of body and mind, loss of power in the social machine, and iniquitous inequalities in the distribution of wealth and chances.

There is a wholly malign competition between individuals and nations. We can conceive of a very different state of affairs, and we construct ideals in writing, which responsively intimate that these ideals might be realized in fact. Is it not true that the present conditions have grown up upon underlying assumptions based on Christian dogma, that we are each what we are, by some sort of predestination, and have also grown up upon an antecedent and traditional organization of society, and that such alterations in this society along the lines of freedom and democratization have developed against opposition which has cost lives, desolated homes, and introduced natural rights against the fierce contradiction of privileges and titles and hereditary power?

Is it not also true that the world has submitted to slow measures of amelioration—indeed is now making much progress in such directions—but because forced to a dead and live issue, the economical regeneration of society would involve hereafter incalculable changes, and a partial subversion perhaps of inherited prejudices and beliefs, not to mention the thick and thin allegiance

to a classified society, which would find itself shocked and pained and outraged?

Now suppose that a massive sense of loneliness entered the consciousness of men, that they felt themselves rudderless and unobserved in the material and spiritually void universe, strange heirs to a stranger mystery, and absolutely confined within the powers and motions of their own minds to make their way, or to establish themselves on some material footing of happiness?

Is it then a preposterous attempt for them to set up a devised and artificially arranged system which according to their best lights would bring them the dispensation of peace and joy; understanding peace and joy to mean a rational use of the pleasures of the earth, with their diffusion over every one to the extent of their natural capabilities to appreciate, or their physical ability to appropriate them? Would it be unreasonable for publicists to argue that there were no longer any bonds with the past, that need be considered, and that on the *tabula rasa* of complete elimination of the claims of the past, renunciation of its bequests, it became the proper thing for the world to remake its social fabric, weaving into it whatever it best might of science and satisfaction?

Take for instance this enormous solecism called Europe, with its separate governing establishments, its various armies, and multiplied expenses of maintenance, not to mention its perpetuation of prejudice and international friction. What a monstrous absurdity from the view point of common sense and economy! How very naturally philosophic publicists have

dreamed of a United Europe, with all its duplicated and reduplicated systems of bureaucracy replaced by more simple and coordinated governments.

And then its internal problems; let them be also summarily settled in the interest of enlightenment and humanity. Demolish this stupid and sanguinary Russia, wipe its dynasty off the face of the earth, and subject it to rational control, *delete* Turkey and supplant its decadent rule with modern and sanitary methods. Let there be among the states of the earth a forcible expugment of the vicious, the incompetent, the loitering and obstructive and a reconcentration along lines of least resistance, of mental stability and economic justice as well, let us say, along lines of idealistic beauty.

It is hard to believe that this could be accomplished except by War. H. G. Wells has put this plainly (Anticipations) and has illustrated the possible condensation of Europe around one linguistic and social nucleus into a confirmed and static unity, Asia around another, and America around a third, which should be these United States of America.

Take again the innumerable interior questions of countries, of governments, their disease, their interferring poverty, their criminal classes and their irregular and excessive procreative results. These ask for reformation, for repression, or extirpation, and the wholesale application of scientific schemes of improvement, if such can certainly be discovered.

We would be confronted in all this with an absorbing, confident, and irresistible ruling impetus which will work coercively, intelligently and express itself in

mental gestures of a lofty disinterested embodiment of righteousness and austere intellectualism. A rather impossible dream it might appear, and quite analogous to an imaginable oligarchy of tyrannous empiricists and cranks. But a process like this is inevitable, it grows today in diassociated groups of intrepid and convinced thinkers; it would be the counterpart of regenerative movements that we have seen, in the last chapter, would be inaugurated under the dispensation of a revelation announcing the existence of God, and the certainty of a Future Life.

For in both cases an authoritative impulse arises to advance social conditions to higher and more satisfactory planes, to start influences—even actually to devise and execute laws—of obliteration of older and diseased conditions. But there would be an obvious and temperamental difference in the action and the actors in two such schemes of improvement.

In the first—that taking place under the ascertained certainty of God—the doers would represent the sympathetic and softened consciousness of the Christian philanthropist, not indeed dispossessed of an urgent sense of responsibility and not devoid of firmness, but sensibly actuated by love and the considerations of Christian brotherhood. The rectifiers of society in the latter case—where the reference to God of reformatory plans disappears—would be more hardy, more ruthlessly harsh upon disorder, and represent a reasoned out code of scientific precision in bringing the whole world, in some fashion, in line with extreme rational principles of construction and growth.

It is not unfair to say that today speculative progress has been made along such lines, and the work of Wells, Galton, Stanley-Hall, Starbuck, etc., show unanimity of design and identity of aims.*

But there is an overwhelming importance attachable to this Plan, and its issues. It must, either way, act as a dislocating jolt to previous opinions, to the half settled way of regarding the two deep questions this book is concerned in asking. If a revelation comes no one can measurably estimate the astounding consequences, or quite exactly foresee its psychological or emotional products. We all realize that today these questions are shoved by many, into the rubbish heaps of unnecessary and annoying problems, problems purely vexatious because insoluble. By others they are regarded as settled in such a prescribed manner as their denominational faith illustrates, but even then with a nugatory and insipid style of assent. They do not discuss them with much unction, and they carefully suppress any vituperative zeal against those who deny them altogether. This latter class—those who deny the common faith—is a very large one, numerically it perhaps exceeds any solid group of antagonistic opinion. It has increased amazingly, and the whole current of contemporaneous literature, the book expression of modernism distinctly enforces, propagates, and applauds it.

*It does not seem unlikely that there might arise a rehabilitation of slavery for economic purposes and the racial elevation of inferior classes; civilization would become profoundly utilitarian, with a drastic assortment of men to their appropriate places, and an institution of slavery properly dispensed and guarded against abuse or cruelty might become in certain climatic provinces the industrial groundwork of society. Plato's republic or the division of labor in ant communities might gain a substantial reflection in our human aggregates.

Lastly there are the groups of believers who register daily unshakable vows to believe the orthodox statements, and who shun discussion, operate exclusively their thought amid known conventions of religion and develop an esoteric serenity through the conventional practice of worship.

To all these several assemblages of contrasted thinking, or unthinking, men and women, the revelation the Plan seeks, would come with profoundly disturbing tremors. To be a revelation at all, for our purpose, it must be indisputable, and carry in its method the most stringent arguments for accuracy. This positivism then would actually arrest the attention of the most shallow, the most irreverent, or the most obdurate while, in spite of all their professed anticipations the believers would be sharply shaken. On the other hand the failure of our Plan—a Plan solemnly prepared and rigorously observed with the full responsible endorsement and observance of the whole Christian and the whole religious world—would, not so pervasively, but quite feelingly bring its surprise, its awakening amazement.

It is this awakening, in either case, that would prove to be the concussion necessary to start mankind upon its new era of social change. The ground of course has been made ready, the seed is sown, and with either of these declarative and serious results the process of alteration might be violently started. Mr. Wells has eloquently lamented that we seem—and he is speaking for the *New Republicans*—to be in a state of *quasi* stagnation, doing a great deal of thinking, a great deal

of listening, overmuch declamation, but are not advancing bodily upon the highways of beneficent reformation; "to state these questions is like opening the door of a room that has long been locked and deserted. One has a lonely feeling. There are quite remarkably no other voices here, and the rusty hinges echo down empty passages that were quite threateningly full of men seventy or eighty years ago. But I am only one very insignificant member of a class of inquirers in England who started upon the question why are we becoming inefficient a year or two ago, and from what starting point it is I came to this—I do not believe therefore that upon this dusty threshold I shall stand long alone. We take most calmly the most miraculous of things, and it is only quite recently that I have come to see as amazing this fact, that while the greater mass of our English-speaking people is living under the profession of democratic Republicanism, there is no party, no sect, no periodical, no teacher either in Great Britain or America or the Colonies, to hint at a proposal to abolish the aristocratic and monarchical elements in the British system. There is no revolutionary spirit over here, and very little missionary spirit over there. The great mass of the present generation on both sides of the Atlantic takes hardly any interest in this issue at all. It is as if the question was an impossible one, outside the range of thinkable things. Or as if the last word in this controversy was said before our grand fathers died."

Now, excessively and intensely descriptive and enthusiastic as Mr. Wells is, perhaps no one, deliberately

weighing his projects and his criticism, would literally adopt the former, or unreservedly endorse the latter. The matter is of small moment as to detail. His obstreperous earnestness, at any rate, is aimed at this question—shall not the utmost possible efficiency of a nation be secured, and if Yes, then he discusses how we may reach that end. We cannot indefinitely stay as we are, the Future will open doors into vastnesses of social plans which will put upon social life, upon the exterior aspects of trade, government, habitation, domesticity, amusement, literature and art a most amazing contrast to their present relations to life in general and to the individual. At least we think so.

But the *present* hesitates before that *future.* It stands apprehensively before a door upon which its hand rests, but from which it withdraws with indecision. It slightly shivers before the irrelevancy of new ideals. The world is on the whole pleasant and entertaining, safe, agreeable, and brimming over daily with novelties in ideas, discoveries, and mechanical projects. Why plunge into a new chaos of revolutionary propagandas, and stir into frantic acerbity, the invaded interests of hereditary wealth or aspiring money-making, or overset the petted and rooted customs of the modern sybarite? Mr. Wells and his votaries confront a colossal inertness, and exactly because ninety percent of the people who rule and do things are contented. But with the success or failure of our Plan an emotional exaltation, or a mental dislodgment, is formidably involved. Either way the masonry of existing conditions will be shattered, and expansive ideas springing

into the gaping rents will increase the dislocation. This would appear to be inevitable.

Now the contrasted movements attendant upon the dual developments might we think with safety be characterized as, in case of a revelation, *idealistic propulsion*, and, in the case of its refusal, *materialistic dreams*. A new idea, a whole phalanx of ideas would surge upward upon the troubled surface of thinking life, and they would, in the excited and poised state of the popular fancy spread. As M. Tarde says; "the fact that a new taste or idea has taken root in a mind which is constituted in a certain fashion carries with it no reason why this innovation should not spread more or less rapidly through an indefinite number of supposedly like minds in communication with one another. It would spread instantaneously through all these minds, if they were absolutely alike, and if their intercommunication was perfect. It is this ideal, an ideal that is happily beyond realization that we are fast approaching."

In this chapter under the caption of the Alternative, we are concerned in sketching simply the hedonistic consequences of God's Silence; the silence would be the essential point weighed, even though silence forms no incontrovertible argument against God's presence. Granted then that the world of thought confronted this conviction—arising let us presume, and arising not illogically, from the failure of the Plan to evoke a response—what might be expected to follow? In the first place the mental control of the world would force forward into public prominence some asserveration or

corollary of this sort; a practical conclusion to the whole matter is that we must look after ourselves, that we must adopt the artificial system which will bring the greatest happiness to the greatest number or if not that the greatest happiness to all; we must extend to the many the maximum enjoyment; this life is all, and the organization of society should contribute simply to the evolution of the greatest health, the greatest strength, the greatest achievements possible to human effort, and, proceeding along the lines of the least resistance, bring to each one all the enjoyment and promise his faculties and constitution permit, pushing him into those avocations which best suit him, and in which he can return to the community the results legitimately expected.

We must entrench ourselves on morality as the only safeguard to our physical and political or civic continuity, moulding all the activities around the central unit of the Home, but so coordinating every action, every motion, that there can be no waste, no extravagance, no disuse, no misapplication, no idleness, no disease, but only a concentrated substantial efficiency, that will bear fruit in work, and discovery, postulating, as perhaps the last triumph, the perpetuation of human life, and a sort of hieratic power over the forces and elements of nature.

Of course this would mean a gigantic socialism, or several big concretions of socialism, or it might even mean a congeries and groups of small socialisms, adapted to language and temperament, and all animated or ruled, like a siderial system, by a dominant

law of progress, in the direction of health, manners, and knowledge, and art. The picture can be made most refined and most stimulating. But the evident outcome to our mind is this, that the new society that may arise will really be less directed to the immediate procurement of large average individual ability than it will to the immediate suffusion of material pleasure, to the provision for genial and helpful physical conditions for all, so that the young may marry—within of course the limitations of inclination and desire—the old may remain content and fed, and every one find a natural life amid stimulations of exercise, work, play, and recreation. Suffering and poverty are the tap roots of the vice and crime of the world, and as long as those incurable tendrils draw from the soil of destitution, penury, and ignorance, the poisons of envy, malice, rage and lusts, they will bear these cleistogamous buds and resist extermination.

The new state or states will aim to give to each, proper living conditions, so that with the sunshine of contentment the noxious soils in which the social poisons hide may be refreshed and purified. In these United States today, this is, in a wonderful degree true now, and it would seem therefore indicated that the readjustment of other societies must begin with some sort of a democratic state. The various culture and the development of the ideals, and that stringent propulsion of the most able forward, which Mr. Wells has so ingeniously and invitingly sketched, might follow. But at first the whole energy of the New Republics would be stretched towards the goal of mere social

eugenics, family life—with probably procreative limits —and a distinguishable distribution of opportunity, and with it the rights of property and the rights of personal liberty. For no socialism which intends a magnified Oneida community, a Brook Farm, or a New Harmony, is tolerable, in thought or practice. The crude and detestable pressure of every one in the same mould, the forced contiguity of dissimilar natures, and tastes, and the elimination of the private home with its industries, ambitions, decorations, and intimate and ramified history, as men are and as they increasingly become, will fail. Instead of a fabric of multiplied parts, each with its molecular unity and separateness, and glowing with its individual satisfactions, there would be a doughy mass, consistent, compacted, and serviceable perhaps but incapable of creativeness, of amplitudes of social vibration, of originality, or of the rush upward of individual types.

However it is unnecessary, if it were in our power possible, to estimate or draw the details of the process, that would ensue when mankind—the educated and civilized sections of mankind—undertakes in a common and manifold way, to place itself upon a new ulterior footing of social, economic, and civic construction. We feel sure that there would be a newer and wide utilization of the earth, with probably the forcible extinction of the savage, the useless, the torpid, with a possible reduction of many to a literal slavery, a general house-cleaning of the earth, sweeping clean its dusty corners, and emptying into the ocean of oblivion the dross, rust, and ashes, of decrepitude, superstition, and aimless

aboriginal cults. It is pretty easy to see that much of the labyrinthine intricacy and the picturesque strangeness and the untidy prodigality of contrasts in the world, as we know it, would vanish, but there should be no lamentation over that; the end in view would be the occupation of the world with happy men and women, living natural lives under moral restraints, while a vast intellectual astuteness grows and grows, in depth and comprehension, building up perfection of knowing, and with it perfection of execution and designing.

Now the shock of feeling that brings on so speedily this momentous change, these consecutive materio-idealistic steps towards some "far off end," would be, according to our hypothesis, the realization that God either does not exist, or that He is impassive, and relegates the conduct of this earth in its organized social aspects, to the best thought, the wisest councils, the scientific prescience of its workers and investigators. The effect of a real consciousness of loneliness, and an abandonment of the dim or acute sense of a God, would be of course very considerable. Such a conclusion we may imagine would be bitterly opposed, but the majority would sweep into power on a wave of practical atheism.

If we reflect for a moment on the removal from our mental background of the idea of a God, we do indeed reach a feeling of extreme despondency. We become as it were orphans in a universe destitute of sympathy, and borne to some certain doom by the cosmic tendency to ruin; the spiritual backgrounds are removed, and aspirations could no longer cling to a transcendental

goal of recognition and approval. It would be so at first, but like deserted children, or men and women in a wreck, we might become influenced by our common fate to draw together, and even more quickly inaugurate the helpful sharing of the commot lot, and so slowly entrench ourselves in a philosophy, not cynical, but brave, a little stoical, interested, and resigned, and probably not unmingled with optimistic eloquence.

Were this experiment ever tried, this Plan ever tested, it might be sincerely hoped that God would indeed speak, and that society might move into its final forms on this earth, under the incitements of religious sentiment, rather than guided—however wisely—by the godless edicts of scientific infallibility, with the concentrated brilliancy and eagerness of a momentary existence, as the disk of illumination from an arc light, thrown by a passing steamboat on the banks of a river, has every instant within its ring of light an intense interest, but all the contents of that ring are the next moment lost in impenetrable gloom.

The aim of this brief treatise is now attained. We have suggested an experiment of momentous meaning. It seriously touches the deepest emotions of our beings, and has respect to the deepest needs of our life; and yet, if there is no God, neither those emotions or those needs can continue to be discussed. Our consciousness in this respect must be reformed, and a large amount of its mental furniture or its mental dress, become suddenly mythical, fabulous, impossible.

The project embodied in this book has a preposterous look. It may appear to many as a sacrilegious and

foolish essay, a silly interpolation of human curiosity against the stern and eternal silences of the Almighty, as if a child, urged by some precocious whim should ask his parents the reason of their being, and decline obedience unless the rationale and the meaning of his relation to them was lucidly revealed to him. This would be styled an impertinence in the child, or at least a fantastic oddity, and the answer might be either a reprimand or some more touching illustration of the father's authority.

The analogy is false and the criticism is unfair. Mr. Froude has written that "no honest soul can look out upon the world, and see it as it really is, without the question rising in him whether there be any God that governs it all," and, if the truth was fully known about the last interior sensations of the heart of men today, it would prove to be, I think, a surprising and not reassuring revelation of uncertainty, and clouded reticences. We are not children even in our presumed relations to God, but have certainly been endowed with prerogatives of inquiry and judgement. The very critical value of this knowledge entitles us to use up all means at our command for its settlement. When we turn to science, and no ears can afford to be deaf to science, and its affirmations today, we enter a field of beautiful theories, supported by marshalled facts, we see the phenomena of nature unfolded and explained, we are led backward into a history of events which seems to be a detailed demonstration of law, and while a thinking being might postulate God from all these observations and their elucidation, yet as a matter of

record we are furnished that belief from a book which —containing a revelation—is at odds with all this science and research.

No one can doubt that who has read Huxley's two books, Science and the Hebrew Tradition, and Science and the Christian Tradition. There is indeed in this Book a world of lofty and noble sentiment, adages of comfort in bereavement and sorrow, moral codes and soaring songs of faith and adoration; it carries in it no wilted message of compromising indulgence, and loses no note of emphasis in its strong and simple injunctions, but its material groundwork, its secular framework, is discredited, and the voice which is supposed to be speaking in it should speak to us again, and with what just urgency may we not claim it!

The speculative forecast of a community living without a God and the abandonment of all this vast and gracious tradition which is associated with the Bible, is fraught with dread and alarm; is it wrong to avert any such catastrophe by an appeal to God for His reassertion?

The note of expeditious subserviency can here be heard. Why, it can be asked, disturb our peace of mind, why undertake an experiment perhaps mischievously and willfully conceived, and impossible of successful execution, and upon its failure leave the world still more confused, more undecided, and more rebellious; moral philosophy and common sense, and the dictates of prudential statesmanship tell us the fundamental necessity of this belief in a God as the criterion and arbiter of human conduct, why run the risk of

losing this belief altogether, and shipwreck civilization for the indefinite chance of success in a meretricious and an unseemly invention?

Well the answer is directly pertinent. It is that the loss of this belief is progressively increasing, that with thousands and thousands it lingers as a semblance and shell, holding no concrete and definite substance of faith, and that that same subversion of civilization—if it will be a subversion—will eventually come at a calculably distant period, when the widening contagion of unbelief will displace the belief itself. About this there can be no question. To be sure it is just conceivable that God might avert that by an interposition of His own initiative, some such interposition as we are here seeking to secure, and it is conceivable that it is His purpose to do so, when the delicacy of the balance between unbelievers and believers is shifting towards the side of the former; or else it is a matter of no concern to Him.

Now as a distinct statistical condition we are told that just that shifting has already taken place. Common observation shows in this city that the churches are empty, with the exception of the Catholic, and *they* hesitatingly hold their own, while the Jewish synagogues grow from numerical additions through immigration. In Europe something very similar has come about, judging from the patent revulsion from the church in France and in Italy, and even in Spain.

If we attempt to enlist the precision of figures this does not seem borne out. According to Dr. H. K. Carroll there were in the United States in 1890 nearly fifty-

seven million believers or adherents of all creeds and denominations, and perhaps some five million of non-believers and passive indifferents. The figures are probably overestimated, at least those for the churches but taking them as they are, and comparing them with the census reports for 1900 the tendency to disintegration and loss among the orthodox communions is not marked.

The increase of adherents in the large denominations in the United States—Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran, Presbyterian—certainly at first barely keeps pace with the increase of population, but latterly seems to exceed it, as the adjoined table (not probably rigidly accurate) shows:

	CHURCHES	PER-CENTAGE + OR −	POPULATION	PER-CENTAGE + OR −
1900	21,725,000		79,393,000	
1901	21,834,000	+ .5	79,893,000	+ .63
1902	23,088,507	+ .508	80,200,000	+ .385
1903	23,000,000	— .34	81,000,000	+1.00
1904	23,624,000	+2.71	82,000,000	+1.23
1905	24,184,000	+2.37	83,500,000	+ .61
1906	25,155,000	+4.01	85,568,000	+2.48
1909	34,517,377		90,372,266	
1910	35,332,776	+2.37	91,972,266	+1.75
1911	36,095,085	+5.00	93,572,266	+1.73
1912	36,668,165	+1.03	95,172,266	+1.72
1913	38,059,428	+3.77	96,772,266	+1.65

The estimates after 1906 are made upon the entire census of all denominations excluding members of the Hebrew Faith, who may number two million. The evident approximation and the actual increase of the percentages of the church-growth with those of the population are misleading. A large portion of the increase in population is to be attributed to emigra-

tion, and the emigrants, for the most part are attached, nominally at least, to some denomination, which imparts to the church census of members a deceptive appearance of enlargement. Church membership or Church attendance is a variable function, in some or many instances, of temporal states, and both prosperity and adversity send their recipients to church.

Robertson has affirmed that the "nineteenth century closed on a record of free-thinking progress which may be said to outbulk that of all previous centuries of the modern era together," and he further intimates that "in no other age is to be found the phenomenon of wide spread critical skepticism among the laboring classes." He points out in Germany that in an increasing proportion the theological students come from the rural districts, the towns furnishing even fewer among the Catholic population; though it has grown from ten millions in 1830, to sixteen millions in 1880; the number of theological students has fallen from eleven to four per one hundred thousand inhabitants.

The continent of Europe has evinced this tendency more strikingly than England, and it may well be thought that in Russia with its uncontrolled barbarity; masquerading under the profession of a church, there must have taken place large secessions from orthodoxy, and unguarded and violent reactions towards agnosticism and denial. Every where it must be remembered there is also the deterrent fear among the established and prosperous that the rejection of deism means—as in many cases it certainly does—political radicalism and social subversions so that a cloak of belief in great

numbers thinly hides only the personal dread of rash sociological or political experiments.

Again as Prof. Royce has said in one of his essays (Problems of Good and Evil), "men do not like to have the foundations of their lives shaken; and when these foundations have never been rationalized, and have no better warrant than unthinking custom, the mere motion to examine them critically, seems to be risking the solidity of the whole social structure, and is resented accordingly." Such a conservative and preservative restraint is naturally strong in the English, but there is little reason to question the increase of skepticism among these tough hearted and invincibly rooted traditionists.

However, be the mere numerical showing of departure from the churches what it may, this essay has distinctly justification on the ground of intellectual, philosophical, satisfaction. We do not wish to lose the ulterior reference of the universe to God, and yet the facts of experience, the detail of history, the trend of scientific thought are not at all reconcilable with the traditional utterance of revelation, as we know it, and quite noticeably forces us to a grave acknowledgment of defect, uncertainty, and dissatisfaction.

Observe that in this case the stillness of the multitude under the provocations of doubt should carry no negotiable weight in an argument for more light, when we consider their limitless ignorance and their limitless patience, the absolute conceptual retardation of their intelligence to the bare facts of eating, sleeping, pleasure, and procreation.

The endurable terms of existence are to be determined by men and women, who think more and know more, for their thinking and knowing concerns itself after all with the necessitous limitations of the lives of these poor, and thoughtless believers. I mean that, given a direct renewed indisputable affirmation by God of his existence, his positive relations to this world as its mainstay and interpenetrating energy, as well as its father and friend, then there must follow revitalization of efforts to make it right and pure, and to empty it of its present absurdities and injustice. Nor is it less plain that if there is no answer, and we are driven to interpret this silence as a proof of God's absence, or of His indifference, or less despairingly of His immutable will to leave to ourselves the regulation of this world, that there will also follow changes, renovations, and a new life.

There is a common prepossession among the Christian sects that uncertainty or the veiled vagueness of the present situation nourishes faith, with its attendant retinue of virtues and its mystical properties of strengthening the soul. Undoubtedly there is truth in this, but are the refined and delicate acquisitions of spiritual character to be estimated, when acquired by a few, as outweighing the value of the resumption of faith by many more, and the quickening of the faith that now perchance burns dimly in believing hearts, throughout the world?

Besides if God is favorable to this appeal let no philistinian mind think the opportunities for the exercise of faith have departed. If from behind the screen of things

temporal and finite, the voice or hand or face of the Divine Creator emerges and vanishes again into that mysterious and ambient ether of thought, in which perhaps the whole world is bathed, and of which it is a momentary incarnation (See Gustave le Bon's Evolution of Matter) itself, there will remain insoluble trials on every hand, and the abyss of nature will still furnish boundless questions, science can still work unappeasingly at its problems, and Faith, that glittering emblem of the Christian, will still be unencumbered by too much light or any excess of certainty.

But whether God announces Himself or He does not, the world by a sharp transference of intense attention will find itself confronting in either case a new resolve. If God speaks, then we may expect a startled and intensive continuation of the religious system, and probably as today the Protestant and the Catholic regime, both according to Sabatier expressing the dogma of authority in one emanating from an infallible Pope, in the other from an infallible Bible, and with them Sabatier's third regime, the religion of the spirit, wherein "the moral conflict is appeased and the metaphysical chasm is filled by the revelation of the infinite love by which God unites Himself to man, becomes immanent in his weak being, and by that act raises him up and makes him live in God," and this last might grow inordinately to the suppression of all churches. If God does not speak, then again we should expect to see the disappearance of the technical or formalistic religious sentiment and practice in some large measure, and the passage of the world of action, and of government, of thought and specula-

tion, into schemes of scientific utility, and socialistic organization, probably also through scenes of much confusion, acrimonious argument, and destructive physical conflict, with an ultimate result of the world resting in some stage of economic precision, and the enforced dispensation of an education dealing pertinaciously with all the questions of health, adolescence, marriage, children, society, and self support and a slow surrender of the romantic phases of life, to the sovereignty of intellectual prediction and rule.

Is it not time that the world gained a new access of interest? Science industriously keeps us interested, and struggles to add its messages of novelty, working at some dimly conscious scheme of explaining all things, but science becomes tedious, and there is a furtive sense within us that it fails to meet our spectacular needs, or irrigate the grounds of passion, poesy, imagination, and what might be called psychological unrest, with the refreshing and enriching waters of mystery and miracle. Time moves relentlessly forward, and we as transient flames pass and vanish like the spectres of Plato's cave. But are we only flames extinguished in the burning, or as we die out does our sharpened essence enter into new and brighter lights? Shall we be forced to a pure atheism, for Maine de Biran has said that a philosophy which ascribed to deity only infinite thought or supreme intelligence eliminating volition and love was pure atheism? Or shall we come into some accelerated phase of religious satisfaction and insight? Would not the Plan here sketched help us to one or the other?

In closing we are tempted to try the patience of the reader by a last reflection. M. A. Sabatier in his very thoughtful and devout work—The Religions of Authority—has rejected both the Catholic and the Protestant churches, at least as far as their claims have been made by each an obligatory proof of their message to men. That is, he has described and named the Catholic church as a religion relying on the authority of the Pope, its bishops, its councils, and the historical doctrine of Apostolic Succession for its creed and formularies, and he has denounced it, because "it has destroyed itself by its own excesses, and no longer appears to minds, having a degree of liberal culture, as anything but a spectre of the past." He has placed in contrast with it—though not preeminently to its advantage—the Protestant church, as depending upon the authority of the Bible and has summarized that effort in his stricture "that it could not succeed, because it was vitiated by a radical inconsistency; that the words of those who conducted it resembled the sand heaps which children make when they think to carry the top higher by piling on it the sand which they pull out from below." He has sharply criticised the claims of both as misleading and impotent.

His point of view seems to us fallacious, but as we are here engaged in a practical search, and have no interest in polemics as such, and as we have already discovered large reasons for distrust in both church and revelation, as competent to afford certainty in the questions we are considering—viz., the existence of God, and the certainty of a Future Life—we naturally turn to any new

evidence which may help us, and we for a moment at least, eagerly inspect this *Religion of the Spirit*, which Sabatier offers as something superceding the rejected Catholic and Protestant positions, and in which perchance our doubting hearts may attain confidence on these points. It would be quite absurd for us to lay before the reader the amplifications made by Sabatier of his religion of the spirit. It is unnecessary. We are after proofs. Does the religion of the spirit furnish them, for if it does our Plan is nullified at once. It certainly does not; it falls immeasurably beneath the religions of authority in this respect, for it relies upon emotion, sentiment, a spiritual inward glow, and on excitation of feeling, proceeding from "the Christian consciousness, as constituted by the vital antithesis of two opposing sentiments; the sense of fatal separation from God, and the sense of blessed reconciliation with Him."

It *assumes* what we desire to *see* proved, and there seems nothing for it, so far as reassuring utterances for us are concerned, but to return to an extraneous, an historic event for the evidence we seek, and of course with this reprisal we are exactly where we were before. Sabatier's book is full of goodness, of epigrams and assertions, it is saturated with religious fervor and very charmingly utilizes a deep personal insight to give to all Christian feeling a philosophical beauty, but it is hopelessly inoperative as furnishing—except through feeling—a proof of God. And feeling—justified doubtless in its energumens—must come increasingly under the suspicion of insufficiency, for it

is demonstrably transitory, and circumstantial, and would never be permitted in the court room, or in the laboratory to prove innocency or guilt, or to regulate our views as to the nature of any physical phenomena.

CHAPTER X

Conclusion

The attitude and temperament of this book is one of caustic realism. It may indeed seem a harsh reflection of the spirit of St. Thomas. But this cannot be construed as an impeachment. It is difficult to see why St. Thomas is not to be approved, nor in the story as it stands in the Testament, was disapproval censoriously allotted to him.

His frame of mind was considered legitimate, even if less lofty than his companions, and he was satisfied with proofs. And are not proofs essential? Lilly has written in his Enigma, "true it is that although this religion (Christianity) has been in the world for well nigh two thousand years, it has not as yet, in all its various forms received the allegiance of a majority of the human race," and only yesterday the late Pope—in an utterance which will not probably have the slightest weight, but which is significant as proceeding from the high point of observation commanded by one whose sole occupation is the registration of the religious tendencies of the time—has said that the modernists "finally set aside as insufficient the proof of God's existence from the constitution of the universe, and the proof of revelations from miracles."

I cannot see how any one can regard carelessly our necessitudinous position, the flat hopelessness of ad-

ministering faith to men in God, when they prevailingly deny His being, or regard it dubiously by reason of the cold predominance of a scientific regimen in the world, which seems to rule with a heartless precision irrespective of merit or suffering or injustice and a vast turmoil of ethnic tides and political ambitions which has continuously, throughout history, convulsed the world with chaos and misery, in which no sudden hand alighted to smite the wicked or help the helpless.

So far as we can see God comes into the world through men who live precariously for ideals they can intermittently understand, and seldom realize. But reflections of this sort drag us away from the essential nucleus of our plea. Let misery remain, and wickedness, and let the struggle go on, the light and the shade, the baffling troubles and the weltering misdirection and ferment, and postulant agonies of despair and imprecation. Let that all be. We are in the world, part of it, as it is. If straightened it is to be, somehow and sometime it will be, I imagine, but is God there also; *is He there?* or Not? Does science answer this query? No. As R. A. Proctor said, "and science answers these questions as they were answered of old 'As touching the Almighty we cannot find Him out'." Does experience answer it? Perhaps. In many ways we improve, and dim lights of understanding that the world is meant for all, and not for a few, play glimmeringly around us today, shining most brilliantly in these United States of America; but is this improvement from God?; it so often comes from those to whom He is professedly a myth. Cannot we compel some new accent from the

embracing mystery about us? Let the mystery remain. It must remain anyhow, for it has well been said, to explain our being is to abolish it, but what we want is the satisfaction of the cry for *companionship*, and we ask for it in a day which remains perforce, as far as its mental apprehension goes, in the austere judicial position of requiring proofs for its faith.

We have rehearsed the reasons which should make the Plan described feasible. There is an accepted revelation proclaiming God, and the constitution and the beauty of the world, or the universe, force us to logically conclude that its author would intellectually sympathize with our request, while compassion issuing from a source of love would impart the impetus of desire to do so. The revelations, the churches, our spirits—today the sole witnesses to God—move in regions of persuasion exorbitantly feeble for the purposes of conviction in this matter, and through the avenues of prayer by which all our needs should receive consideration we ask, or may ask, for a sign. If God answers, the world emerges into a welcome light of reassurance, and if there is no answer, then, seizing, as it were, the reins of things ourselves let society resolve itself into new units of action, in conformity with the demands of a utilitarian Utopia, "when," as a writer in the *Edinburgh Review* writes, "the whole of the antagonistic forces of nature have been quelled, and Man is entire master of his own fate and maker of his own environment."

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